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# JERUSALEM UNDER THE HIGH-PRIESTS

FIVE LECTURES ON THE PERIOD  
BETWEEN NEHEMIAH AND  
THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

EDWYN BEVAN

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To the  
Very Reverend T. W. Jex-Blake, D.D.  
Dean of Wells

DEAR MR. DEAN

The delivery of the following Lectures will be always associated in my recollection with the hospitality of your house. The Society on whose behalf they were given owes much in the past to your support and co-operation. Under such circumstances I feel that there is no name which I could inscribe upon a page of dedication more appropriately than yours.

EDWYN BEVAN.

## PREFACE

THE Lectures in this book were composed for popular audiences in connection with the Bath and Wells Diocesan Society for Higher Religious Education, and it is not their object to produce what the professed historical student would regard as new results, but to give in a few strokes the general outline and colour of a period which must surely have an interest for everybody who finds any interest in the Bible. Any one who should come to a book of this sort for the elucidation of obscure problems or matters of controversy would certainly be disappointed; it is on such points indeed that a work intended for students would chiefly fix its scrutiny; it has been my principle to neglect them, and try rather to show in a connected sketch what is plain and assured. Many omissions which in a set history of the period would be unpardonable will strike any specialist into whose hands the book may fall. And if he is inclined to ask, why at least I did not give fuller treatment to this or that, I can only answer that in the first instance the lectures were cast with reference to limits of time, and that afterwards I felt that to attempt to remedy their incompleteness would be to embark on a work of

which I did not see the issue. It seemed better that they should go out as they are, popular lectures, sketches, frankly limited in their scope, than make any pretence to be a complete historical manual. It seemed to me that even, as such, they might be welcome to some of those people who, without being experts, are still interested in a period so crucial for the history of our religion, especially when I reflected that, were I asked to mention any book which gave some brief account of it, in accordance with the present state of expert opinion, I should be somewhat at a loss to name one. Those who wish to make a serious study of the period will, of course, go to the books which give them a command of the learned literature on the subject; it is hardly necessary, even in England, to name the great cardinal work of Dr. Emil Schürer. The study of the more distinctively religious currents of the period has been greatly furthered and facilitated by the work of Professor R. C. Charles, the recognised authority upon Jewish apocalyptic writings. I could wish that his translation of the book of *Enoch* were published in a popular form, which would make it more known, as it ought to be, by all those who desire light upon the New Testament. It is from this translation, I need hardly say, that my quotations from *Enoch* are taken. The quotations from the *Psalter of Solomon* follow the version by the Bishop of Winchester and Mr. M. R. James (Ryle and James).

I have tried, in making this sketch, to see things



for myself, to reproduce such an image as is made upon a fresh mind by our documents. At the same time, I have been continually conscious of my debt to the writers whose works have taught me. That I do not acknowledge my obligations more particularly in the course of the lectures is due simply to their popular character. To the readers I have mostly in view such names as Niese and Bousset, for instance, would say nothing. Should any one to whom they are familiar light upon these lectures, he will be able to discern to what extent I am indebted—I am not sure that I know with complete exactitude myself.

E. B.

BANWELL, SOMERSET.

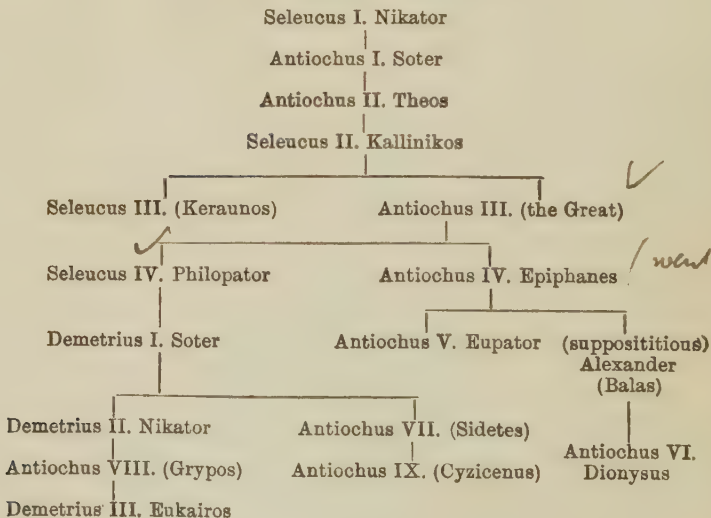
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# JERUSALEM UNDER THE HIGH-PRIESTS

## I

### THE END OF THE PERSIAN PERIOD AND THE MACEDONIAN CONQUEST

THE Jew, the imperishable wanderer of the earth—it is among the strange contradictions he embodies that none of the planted nations is attached by a more passionate, a more sacred devotion to a particular soil. Centuries of exile have not worn out the love with which his heart turns to a certain little district of arid hills at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean—"the land flowing with milk and honey," "the glory of all lands," "the land which the Lord careth for," "our own land." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And yet—this is the extraordinary thing—the association of people and land has never been in this case more than a temporary one. They are no *autochthones*, children of the soil, whose memory cannot show them a time when they did not belong to it. Israel's first entrance into Canaan was a definite event in history, and recent discoveries even allow us to look into

the land, before the Hebrew name was known there. There are two periods in the past of this race during which they have, as a nation, had a footing upon those stony uplands—one the period from Joshua to the Babylonian Exile, the other the period from that Return of the Jews which began under Cyrus to the suppression of the revolt of Barkocheba by the Romans in 135 A.D. With the first of these periods most English people are more or less familiar, because it is covered by the historical books of the Old Testament; but the ordinary Bible of Englishmen contains no narrative relating to the second period, except the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, till we come to the Gospels. In the first period the Israelite tribes are mainly independent of foreign control; in the second period the Jewish state is all through—except for one brief spell of sixty-five years—a subject state. It is with the second period that we have now to deal. And although in the imagination of most readers of the Bible it is little more than a blank—an interval of shadows between the sunlit regions of the Old Testament and the New, it was in truth a period pregnant with great things, a period of supreme importance in the development of that Jewish religion, which with all its good and evil features confronted Him who came at last to the Temple of Jehovah like a refiner's fire, discerning the gold from the dross.

Even for learned men the years between Nehemiah (445 B.C.) and the time of the Greek king of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, two hundred and seventy years later are not lit up by any Jewish chronicle. However important they may think it possible to show that time to have been in the inner



development of Judaism, it is without strictly historical content; no such thing is possible as any record of successive political events. All we can do is to form a sort of still picture of the ordinary aspect of the Jewish state from what we know of its conditions before and afterwards, and follow those great world-movements in which it was involved together with hundreds of other peoples and races, the play of those forces which beat upon it from without.

Let us first remind ourselves what sort of a world it was in which the Jewish community is shown us in the last historical book of the Old Testament, the book of *Nehemiah*. All Nearer Asia—all the lands we now call Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, and Afghanistan—are ruled by a Great King of Persian race, who holds his court in Babylon or in Susa ("Shushan the palace"), or in one of the royal cities of what we should call Western Persia to-day. But under the supremacy of the Great King and his officials the various tribes and petty states are allowed to manage their own affairs pretty much in their own way. Only they have to meet demands made upon their property by the King's representatives in the way of tribute or *bakshîsh*—more or less exorbitant as the case might be—and to furnish a certain number of their young men to serve in the King's armies. The main preoccupation of the government in oriental monarchies has always been to get in tribute and to maintain a strong army: so long as those ends are realised, it is not much troubled how the different classes of the King's subjects live. Israel then forms one element in the great aggregate of peoples embraced

by the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C. But the larger part of the descendants of the old Israelites have been lost in the confused multitude of races; only the Jews and the Samaritans still form nations visibly distinct. And the Jewish nation is coagulated in two locally separate masses. One, and perhaps the richer and more consequential, is gathered in and around the imperial capital, Babylon, where they have been ever since the days of Nebuchadnezzar; the other occupies the city of Jerusalem, gradually rising from its ruins, and a belt of country round it on the grey Judæan hills. The Return from exile was never more than partial: many families were comfortably settled in rich Babylonia, and worldly considerations were not overborne by such feelings as those which moved the Psalmist; "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."

But the Babylonian Jews were nevertheless keenly interested in the fortunes of the community at Jerusalem and of the holy city. If they themselves only went occasionally to worship the Lord in His temple, much, no doubt, of their money found its way to Jerusalem. The book of *Nehemiah* shows us one of these eastern Jews, who had risen to a place of influence in the royal household, appearing at Jerusalem in the guise of reformer and organiser. His work is summed under two heads. He directs the rebuilding of the city's fortifications, so that it may resist the attacks of the neighbouring races—for we must remember that under the loose

Persian rule, one city or tribe might often harry another without moving the imperial government to action—and he readjusts the social relations of the community, especially enforcing the religious law which forbade the intermarriage of Israelites with the daughters of the Gentiles. We need not now go further into his story or discuss the questions raised by his rather problematical connection with Ezra the scribe. With *Nehemiah* the historical narratives of the Old Testament end and a cloud covers Jerusalem and its people for nearly two hundred years.

How are we to think of the people living and being governed in that unrecorded time? And first, who was the chief of the Jewish state? In the early days of the Return we find a civil and a religious chief ruling side by side, Zerubbabel, a descendant of the old royal family, and Joshua the high-priest. Zerubbabel has his place in the framework of the Great King's government, by his being clothed with the authority of local governor, or Tirshatha. But this double headship did not go on. The house of David disappears from sight. The high-priest presently holds the supreme office without a rival. Of course, when Nehemiah carried through his reforms, he intervened as the Great King's representative, as Tirshatha or Pehah, and his authority overrode that of all other persons in Jerusalem. But before the cloud which comes down after Nehemiah again lifts, the Jewish state has only one chief, the hereditary high-priest.

Into what various orders the ruling and judging classes fell we cannot say with any precision. In the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* we find four terms

used to describe them, "princes" (*sarîm*), "elders" (in Hebrew *z'kenîm*, Ezra x. 8 ; in Aramaïc, *sabayyâ*, Ezra v. 5), "rulers" (*s'ganîm*), and "nobles" (*hôrîm*), but what exactly each of these names implied; whether any of them, "princes," for instance, and "nobles," coincide in meaning or whether their meanings overlap, it is impossible from the vague character of the references to make out. Certain things, however, appear. Firstly, the community at Jerusalem was no democracy; the administration was in the hands of an aristocratic class. Secondly, this aristocracy was to some extent one of blood, consisting of the heads of the different families, "fathers' houses."<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, in this aristocracy, the leading men of the *priestly* families, as might be expected in a state whose chief magistrate was the high-priest, came sooner or later to hold a prominent place. In the second century B.C. a senate, in Greek *gerusia*, is definitely mentioned, over which the high-priest presides. But here again we do not know to what extent this body corresponded with the old aristocracy, or how far it had taken shape under the influence of Greek political forms. It is generally thought to be the same body which later on was more usually called by another Greek name, *synhedrion*, council, a term the Palestinian Jews in their language reproduced as *Sanhedrin*.

What is important to observe is the *ecclesiastical* character of the Jewish state in the days after Nehemiah as compared with the old Davidic kingdom. It is not a mere matter of form that its chief rulers are now priests. The distinction in

<sup>1</sup> Ezra viii. 29.

human societies between the religious and the secular was never, of course, so strongly marked in ancient times as it is now; the sharp differentiation of *church* and *state* is really quite a modern step in human progress. In all ancient societies religion was a concern of the state: the ministers of the public religion were officials of the state; and the officials of the state were in some degree ministers of the public religion. With all that there was a difference felt between the functions which secured the people's well-being by what we should now call natural means—the functions of judge and general and statesman—and those which had reference to supernatural processes, to securing the connection between the people and the divine powers. Although these functions might be combined in one person—the kings, for instance, of ancient peoples were normally judges, generals, and priests in one—still the secular functions were more prominent in the king, and gave its peculiar colour to the royal office; the religious functions made up all or most of the business of the priest. When therefore in a community, it is the priests who bear rule, it means that the securing of the connection with the divine powers has taken an unusually large place in the interest of the people; it has seemed a more important concern than the use of ordinary natural means, the exertion of human force and prudence; whereas in the ordinary run of states it was just the other way; the secular functions predominated in the chief magistrate, king or archon or consul; the priests were subordinate. One may express this in the case of the Jewish state of these times, by saying that it is contrasted both with the old Judaic king-



dom and with neighbouring communities in that it looks less like a state and more like a church. It was a development which we can see to have been naturally produced by the loss of political sovereignty acting upon such a constitution and temperament as that of Israel.

But there is one thing which we may already remark at this stage as distinguishing this Jewish society from those societies in which a sacred caste tyrannises the common people at its will and pleasure. In this aristocratic community there is an element with democratic affinities. Sir Henry Maine has pointed out in *Ancient Law* that it is a step in the direction of democracy when all those laws and customs, the knowledge of which has hitherto been the possession of a privileged order, are embodied in a written code which he who runs may read. Well, from the time of Nehemiah and Ezra the divine Law was read in the ears of the people, and the Jew felt that the priesthood derived its authority from the Law, and not the Law its authority from the priesthood. You see how momentous that was. Public opinion could judge the priestly class by reference to the written word which was acknowledged by all alike to be derived directly from God. In a more literal sense than that in which it was said of the Greek republics it might be said of this Jewish community that it knew no sovereign of flesh, that Law was its king. And as we go on, we shall see how the old aristocracy had to give place to this greater power, how the priest came to be overshadowed by the scribe.

But meantime, while the priests had to acknow-

ledge the derivation of their privileges from the Law, what they derived was something very substantial. They drew in to themselves a steady proportion of the riches of the people. It was not only a privileged position which the Law gave them; it was material wealth. You have only to turn to the books of *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy* to see this. Every meal offering, every sin offering, every trespass offering brought by the people became theirs.<sup>1</sup> In the case of some other offerings the priest received a part of every animal sacrificed.<sup>2</sup> When the Palestinian Jew gathered in his corn, his vintage, his figs, his pomegranates, his olives, or his honey, the first-fruits had to go in a basket to the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> When the first-fruits had gone—and these indeed did not amount to more than an inconsiderable specimen of the produce—he had to proceed to the more serious deductions. “All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the corn,” had to be set apart for the priests.<sup>4</sup> This was described by a Hebrew word (*t'rumah*) which our Bibles translate, not very happily, by *heave offering*. The proportion of the *t'rumah* to the whole yield ought, according to the Jewish tradition, to be from a sixtieth to a fortieth. But even this was not all. After the *t'rumah* had been deducted, a tenth of the crop had to be taken out, as the due, not of the priests in the first instance, but of the lower orders of Temple ministers, the Levites; but the Levites had in their turn to pay a tenth of this tenth to the priests.<sup>5</sup> With the payment of the tenth of his corn, the Jew had not yet satisfied all the

<sup>1</sup> Num. xviii. 9.<sup>2</sup> Lev. vii. 30-34.<sup>3</sup> Deut. xxvi. 1 f.<sup>4</sup> Num. xviii. 12.<sup>5</sup> Num. xviii. 20 f.

claims of the priest upon the fruit of his ground. When he went on to make his corn into bread, one loaf in every twenty-five was the priest's.<sup>1</sup> Besides this, the first-born of all his domestic cattle, or a money indemnity for the first-born, according to circumstances, had to go to the priests. His first-born son had to be "redeemed" at the age of a month, by the payment of five shekels, about thirteen shillings in our money. Whenever he killed an animal for his own food, "the shoulder and the two cheeks and the maw" belonged to the priests.<sup>2</sup> Whenever he sheared his sheep, the priests were entitled to a proportion of the wool. At a moment of crisis, a man might seek to extort the help of God by a vow, by "devoting" himself, or some one of his belongings—his ox, his ass, his man-servant or maid-servant.<sup>3</sup> This all meant so much made over to the priests. Or if his conscience smote him as to the way in which he had come by any of his possessions, it was the priests, failing the rightful owner, who received compensation.<sup>4</sup>

The priests, you see, were in a fair position to grow rich. And yet one cannot discover that they could, as a rule, assert their claims by force. The satisfaction of these claims was left to the conscience of the people themselves. It does not seem to have been so left in vain. We hear indeed complaints in the earlier period that the tithes were not regularly brought in;<sup>5</sup> but in proportion as zeal for the Law penetrated the Jewish people—as it did ever more and more—punctuality in paying the priests' dues became a prominent part of righteous-

<sup>1</sup> Num. xv. 17 f.<sup>2</sup> Deut. xviii. 3.<sup>3</sup> Num. xviii. 14.<sup>4</sup> Num. v. 5.<sup>5</sup> Mal. iii. 9; Neh. xiii. 10.

ness. Fear the Lord and glorify the priest; and give him his portion, even as it is commanded thee; the bread of the trespass-offering and the gift of the shoulders, the offerings of righteousness and the holy *t'rumah*," we read in *Ecclesiasticus*.<sup>1</sup> In the book of *Judith* it is represented as a thing which would call down the vengeance of God, that a mountain village far from Jerusalem, when besieged by a heathen army and reduced to famine, should consume "the first-fruits of the corn, and the tenths of the wine and the oil, which they had sanctified and reserved for the priests that stand before the face of our God in Jerusalem."<sup>2</sup> You remember how it is a mark of the Pharisee in the Gospels that he gives tithes of all that he possesses, not of corn and wine only, but even of mint, anise, and cummin. The operation of the same Law, which so often brought the priesthood under the condemnation of the pious Jews, made its revenues extensive and sure.

From all this we may get some notion of the general constitution of the Judæan society in that dark period between Nehemiah and the second century. We must think of it as quite a small society. The Jewish people had not the extension which is shown us in the days of Christ. If we had gone in the fifth century B.C. through Galilee—through all those sacred places so familiar to us, Nazareth, Cana, Bethsaida, Capernaum—we should have been among heathens. The name Galilee is the short for Galilee of the Gentiles, that is the *region* of the Gentiles; the name clung to those uplands between Gennesaret and the sea, even after

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. vii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Judith xi. 13.

they had become predominantly Jewish. We should have been not only among heathens, but among barbarians, a population in which the original basis of Syrian peasants, tillers of the soil, had been crossed with the wilder Arab blood which came in by infiltration from the desert. The people of the Jews we should have found only in Jerusalem and in the fields and villages around Jerusalem to a radius of some ten to fifteen miles. The great lines of traffic, the highway along the sea-board between Egypt and Northern Syria, the caravan routes between Gaza and the Persian Gulf, left the little hill city on one side. Herodotus, who tells us so much about the East in the fifth century B.C., knew the towns and peoples of the sea-board, but he does not mention the Jews. Let us consider briefly what these peoples were by whom they were enveloped.

To the south, spread over the grassy slopes of the country around Hebron, were the Edomites. That was not, of course, the original country of Edom. Their home had been to the south-east, in the region called by our Bibles "Mount Seir." In the last weakness of the old Judæan kingdom they had pressed in upon the southern provinces of the house of David,<sup>1</sup> and had urged on the Babylonian conqueror to annihilate the Jewish state, so that they might occupy its territory themselves. "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." The Edomites, again, were pushed on the east by a branch of the Arabs, the Nabatæans. If it is this to which Malachi points, in the passage where we read, "Esau I hated, and

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxv.



made his mountains a desolation and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness,"<sup>1</sup> we must infer that under the Arab incursions a part of Mount Seir fell back to waste. But in time the Nabatæan Arabs found the advantage of a more settled life, especially as the caravans which brought the precious gums of the East to Gaza went through this country, and in the last century B.C. we find the capital of the Nabatæan prince—called by the Greeks Petra, the Rock—a gathering-place of merchantmen, among whom even Roman traders from the far-off west were frequently to be seen.<sup>2</sup>

The sea-board upon which the Jews looked down toward the west belonged, as of old, to the Philistines. Israel had never, even in the palmiest days of the Davidic kingdom, secured more than a transient suzerainty over the Philistian cities, and those old cities were still great and flourishing—at least we may say this of Gaza, Ascalon, and Ashdod, for Ekron seems to have sunk in relative importance, and Gath to have practically disappeared. The position of the Philistines on a principal line of the world's traffic caused them, no doubt, to eclipse in the eyes of travellers the self-contained community which clustered about the Temple of Jehovah on the hills behind. Farther north, the coast was Phœnician, and the Phœnician cities too, Tyre, Sidon, Gebal, Arvad, and the rest, were still as rich and busy as they had been centuries before. Upon their navies rested the sea-power of the Persian king. Their ships still plied between Syria and the farthest west. They suffered indeed in the provincial rebellions which convulsed the Persian

5  
Philistines

~  
Phœnicians

<sup>1</sup> Mal. i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xvi. p. 779.

Empire in the fourth century, but fearful as the blows seemed which fell upon them from the armies of the Great King, their hold upon the Mediterranean trade could quickly repair the devastations. They had suffered as much before in their immemorial past. In the interior to the north of the Jews, we should think of the old Syrian country towns and villages still gathering in their harvests and worshipping their ancestral gods in the old way.

The immediate neighbours of the Jews to the north were, of course, the Samaritans, the relics of the old Israelite nation adulterated by an admixture of other races in those days of national commingling. The relations subsisting between the Jews returned from Babylon and these their brethren according to the flesh differed according to circumstances. In proportion as the strict legal spirit of Ezra and Nehemiah prevailed at Jerusalem, the two branches of Israel looked at each other with dislike and reprobation. On the other hand we learn from the book of *Nehemiah* that the priestly aristocracy at Jerusalem was united by many bonds of friendship and alliance with Samaritan houses. It was exactly these bonds which his reforms were meant to tear asunder, and did in fact tear asunder. And yet so powerfully did that Mosaic Law whose reign he established command the respect of Israel, that in connection with the reformation carried out in Jerusalem, a reformation on parallel lines was carried out among the Samaritans. We are told in 2 *Kings* xvii. that the religion of the Samaritans after the kings of Assyria had planted heathen colonists in the land was a syncretism of the worship of Jehovah

and the worship of foreign gods. But the Samaritan religion in its later form has discharged this heathen element, and the explanation we find in the account given us by Josephus of the work of Manasseh. Josephus puts this in the time of the last Persian king, Darius Codomannus, but it is generally recognised that it belongs to the time of Nehemiah. Nehemiah found that a son of the high-priest Joiada had married a daughter of the Samaritan magnate Sanballat. "Therefore," he says, "I chased him from me."<sup>1</sup> This offending priest is no doubt the Manasseh of Josephus. He it was who seems to have reorganised the Samaritan religion with the Temple on Mount Gerizim for its local centre.<sup>2</sup> And since the Samaritan religion as we know it is based upon the Pentateuch and has the Pentateuch for its acknowledged scriptures, it is not improbable that it was Manasseh who carried to Shechem the Law-Book whose authority Nehemiah had enforced at Jerusalem. At any rate one must remember that the reproach of semi-paganism directed against the Samaritans in the book of *Kings* has no application to the Samaritans of later times. The great question which then divided them from the Jews did not refer to any of the essential truths of religion, but simply to its local centre. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

For all the conquests of Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians which had swept over this Syrian group of peoples, we do not see that the old conditions of life had been fundamentally altered.

<sup>1</sup> Neh. xiii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xi. § 306 f.

The Syrians, the Phœnicians, the Philistines had not taken on the likeness of their successive masters; they paid their tribute and more or less kept the king's peace between each other, and that was all. But now in the fourth century before Christ there broke upon this ancient world a force more mighty for change than any felt there before. I suppose you know what I mean—the conquests of Alexander. We must turn our attention for a while from the Jewish state to consider this great revolution in the world's history, and follow its workings in so far as they changed the environment in which the Jews found themselves.

Asia from the dawn of history has seen from time to time great waves of rapid conquest sweep over immense areas; men have risen up who have carried all before them in an extraordinarily short space of time. Such was the career of Cyrus, such the career of the early Mohammedan conquerors, such the career of Jenghiz Khan and Timur. Europe has never offered a field to conquests of this kind, except during the break up of the Roman Empire, when the plains of France were trodden by the hordes of Attila. In its first obvious features the conquering career of Alexander the Great resembles the others which I have mentioned. Let me briefly remind you of its course. In the year 334 B.C. the young king of the Macedonians at the head of an army, some 35,000 men strong, drawn from the Balkan peninsula, appears in the north-west corner of Asia Minor. He is at once confronted by the generals of King Darius, beats them upon the river Granicus, and the same year abolishes the Persian rule over the Greek cities of the western coast.

Next year he pushes up into the interior of Asia Minor, traverses it to the Bay of Alexandretta, where he meets the Persian king himself at the gates of Syria. He wins his second great battle at Issus, near the modern Alexandretta, and enters Syria. Next year (332) he moves down the Phœnician and Philistine coast, taking Tyre and Gaza after two hard sieges. Next year (331) he makes himself master of Egypt, and then retraces his way through Syria, turns east, crosses the Euphrates and Tigris, and wins his crowning victory over Darius in the Assyrian country, the modern Kurdistan. The same year he occupies the Great King's chief capitals, Babylon and Susa. Next year (330) he advances into Persia and carries his conquests as far as the confines of Afghanistan. In 329 he crosses the Oxus and conquers Bokhara, and spends the following year also in moving about between Balkh and Samarcand. In 327 he fights his way through Afghanistan and descends into the plains of India. In 326 he subdues the Panjab, and reaches the limit of his conquests towards the east. Turning back now to the west, he traverses in 325 the appalling sand wastes of Beluchistan, losing a great part of his army, but reaches Kirman in Persia safely by the end of the year. Two years after that, while he is making gigantic plans in Babylon for reorganising the empire, for exploring the Caspian, for developing the commerce of the Persian Gulf, he suddenly dies.

You see in extent and rapidity we have conquests of a piece with those of Cyrus and Timur. But below this external resemblance there was a profound difference in the conquests of Alexander.



The difference consisted in that which entered the conquered lands in association with the Macedonian spear. What was that? It was something of a sort incalculably, almost terribly, potent. It was a body of ideas. These ideas represented the mental activity of the race who inhabited the southernmost part of the Balkan Peninsula, and had also spread their colonies over many of the coast-lands of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the race who called themselves Hellenes and we generally call Greeks. They lived for the most part in little separate states, each of which consisted only of a city and the territory immediately round it. In these a kind of mental activity, hitherto unique among men, had been going on for the last few centuries before Alexander, and the result was a body of ideas, a way of thinking and feeling about the world which could not be paralleled anywhere else. We may call it Hellenism. It was embodied in the language they spoke, in the literature which they were in process of making, in the political forms according to which their societies were organised. In certain respects the appearance of Hellenism in the world is the great epoch up to our own day in human history.

Let me explain what I mean. You know we mark off a certain part of our spiritual life, of our mental life, as the distinctively religious. In so far as a man is conscious of a Divine Power behind and within the shifting play of colour and movement which is daily presented to his senses, behind and within the operations of the human spirit, in so far he is a religious being. The sort of feeling which is maintained towards that Divine Power is what gives the

religion of each man, of each race, its characteristic quality. In a religious man's life everything will be touched by his religion, because everything has a relation to the Divine, and when considered in that relation will be an object for religion. But this relation, observe, however vitally important, will not make up all the relations of any given thing. The things of this world have also relations one to the other. In considering these a man exerts mental activity which cannot be called religious. For instance, what a man thinks to-day about wireless telegraphy, about the fiscal question, about the problems of metaphysics, about the beauty of a picture or a poem, need not necessarily depend upon what he feels towards God. He may even think about the Divine and the modes of His revelation without exerting an activity properly religious, when God is an object of thought rather than of worship or love. It is true that the thing of highest worth is a right relation to God. But it is also true that for our life here we need, not only our daily bread, but to have a rational understanding of the conditions, material and mental, which govern the processes of the world and human society. Now we Christians believe that the great epoch in the *religious* life of mankind was when a new divine life streamed into the world from the Person of Jesus Christ, and so we register human history in our current reckoning by reference to that moment. Looked at in regard to the highest spiritual life of man, history divides itself into the time before Christ and the years of our Lord. Well, what I meant just now was that just in the same way when we consider the *rational* life of mankind, the *political* life of mankind, history divides

itself into the time before, and the time after, the beginning of Hellenism. The ideas of the Greeks contained the germs of which our present western civilisation is the development, and remember that this civilisation is still developing, to results beyond our reach to foresee.

The Macedonian people of whom Alexander was king were not themselves Greeks. Perhaps they were a ruder branch of the same stock, still carrying on the old country life, still ruled by their hereditary chiefs, while the Greek race had been tempered by some centuries of city life. At any rate the Greek culture had laid hold of their nobility. The court of the Macedonian kings had been for the last seventy years a resort of Greek artists and men of letters. About half the names of the nobility are Greek. The royal family claimed to be descended from the old Greek heroes. Alexander himself had had the best Greek education procurable, with Aristotle for his master, and we should think of the Macedonian nobles generally as having, each in their degree, received the same sort of lessons. So you see that the Macedonians were well prepared to be the militant champions of Hellenism in the conquered lands.

When Alexander died without leaving a capable heir, there followed, as we might expect, a period of terrible confusion and fighting. I think it is a popular fallacy, due perhaps to the first book of *Maccabees*, that Alexander on his death-bed divided his kingdom among four of his generals. Of course, nothing could be more untrue. There was some pretence at first of keeping the kingdom together, with Alexander's son, born after his death, and Alexander's feeble-minded half-brother, for joint-

kings. But really there was a general scramble among all the strong Macedonian chiefs. The poor kings were soon made away with in that wild time. The inhabitants of the different provinces took little part in the fighting: their new masters fought over their heads with armies drawn mainly from Macedonia and the Greek states; and the fighting and marching to and fro went on over the whole of Nearer Asia and Greece. It is a dreary task to try to follow the different movements of that tangle of wars, and I do not propose to exercise your attention with the effort. The result, of course, was that in time the few among the great chiefs who were the ablest or the luckiest came to the front and the rest disappeared. Thirty years after Alexander's death, the five who were still carrying on the contest all assumed the title of kings, and when we look on still another thirty years we find that it has come to the formation of three kingdoms, which are to be ruled by the descendants of the most fortunate three out of those five. One of these kingdoms, whose territory corresponds roughly with the old Macedonian kingdom which Alexander inherited, need not concern us at all; it lies far off from the region which interests us now. Of the other two we shall have a great deal to say. First let me speak of the kingdom of the house of Ptolemy. It was really the first to be formed. In fact, we may say that it was formed almost immediately after Alexander's death. One of Alexander's principal friends, a Macedonian chief called Ptolemy, had the shrewdness to get himself made governor of Egypt before the actual fighting began. The great advantage of Egypt was that it was defended in a remarkable way

by natural barriers. To invade it by land you had first to transport your army through the waterless desert which separates it from Syria and then you were confronted by the difficult system of its canals. To invade it by sea was impossible because all the coast of the Delta is lagoon, with no harbour but Alexandria. On the other hand it had not the inconveniences of being shut in, because its one Mediterranean harbour, Alexandria, was an extraordinarily good one, and put the ruler of Egypt in a position of advantage for establishing his sea-power over the Levant. So that, in Egypt, Ptolemy could remain tolerably secure and keep his seat through all the storms of those fifty years. Twice hostile armies swept up to the frontier of Egypt and were there brought to a stand. Ptolemy sat in his stronghold and watched all the turns of the conflict, struck in for his advantage wherever occasion offered, and in case of defeat withdrew into his network of canals. The traffic along the Nile and the Red Sea brought him immense riches. In 285 he resigned his kingdom into the hands of his son, the second Ptolemy, and died two years later. I may observe here that it was from now onwards the law of this dynasty that all the kings should bear the name of the founder, Ptolemy. But besides this each one bore a surname, by which we can distinguish them.

The other kingdom with which we shall have to do offers a striking contrast to the Ptolemaïc. It fell to the heirs of the last survivor of Alexander's generals, Seleucus, who finally outlived all his competitors, and fifty-three years after Alexander's death was on the point of taking possession of the whole empire—the prize which had been fought for so long—



when he was assassinated. His son, however, was able to keep together the greater part of the empire for a time, although he had to relinquish all hopes of possessing Macedonia itself, or Egypt. The line of kings descended from Seleucus are what we call the Seleucid dynasty. They did not have one royal name for all the kings, as the Ptolemies had, but the earlier kings were all called either Seleucus or Antiochus. Later on other names came in as well. The territory which at the outset this dynasty aspired to hold was all the Asiatic part of Alexander's empire from the Mediterranean to the frontiers of India. Compared with that, the Ptolemaic kingdom looks very small upon the map. But, of course, this huge extent of the empire, over a country intersected by mountains and rivers, in days when distances were farther than they are now, was really a weakness. The limited compact kingdom of Ptolemy could be easily grasped and administered with machine-like regularity by the central government; Egypt is a country almost made to be the paradise of a bureaucracy. But the Seleucid king had a task exceeding human power. He had to be incessantly flying about from one end of the empire to another to enforce his authority. Fighting was his normal business every summer. Even so, bit by bit, the empire fell to pieces. In some provinces, as in Bokhara and Afghanistan, the Greek governors set up as kings on their own account. In others, as in Persia and the north of Asia Minor, oriental dynasties established themselves. It is difficult to say at first what we are to consider the centre of this unwieldy kingdom. If by centre we mean the residence of the king and his court, it was rather a

moving camp than a fixed city. But there were capitals for the different parts of the kingdom, Sardis for Asia Minor, Antioch for Syria, Seleucia, which had supplanted the ancient Babylon, for the east, and the king was sometimes in one, sometimes in another, according to the need of the moment. You should realise this state of things, because the Seleucid dynasty is often spoken of as "Syrian," and just as people are apt to think of Cleopatra, the daughter of the Ptolemies, as an Egyptian, so they are apt to think of the kings whose chief seat, when their original kingdom had been reduced to little more than Syria, was in Antioch, as Syrians. Both Ptolemies and Seleucids were by race Macedonians, by culture and education Greeks, and foreigners to the end in the eyes of the native Egyptians and Syrians whom they ruled.

Antioch, I have just said, was the Syrian capital of the Seleucids. Where was the frontier drawn between their territory and the Ptolemaïc? to which kingdom did Palestine belong? Ah! that was the burning question! Palestine was just the country which made the standing quarrel between the two houses. You would say at first that naturally it should go with Northern Syria, that the "scientific frontier," as our modern phrase goes, is the strip of desert which lies between Palestine and Egypt. So no doubt the Seleucid kings felt; but then the possession of Palestine was of peculiar importance to the Ptolemies for several reasons. They wanted to dominate the trade route which crossed Arabia to Gaza and was an alternative way of communication with India, besides their own waterway of the Nile. Then Syria, at least the Lebanon, was rich in that

very thing in which Egypt was poor—large timber, and the Ptolemies, to whom sea-power was all-important, could not dispense with timber for their ships. The same motive of sea-power made it seem highly desirable that they should possess the great commercial ports of Tyre and Sidon. So you see there was every reason that the question of Palestine, or Cœle-Syria, as it was then called by the Greeks, should provoke endless wars.

The first Ptolemy with his shrewd glance had seen very quickly the need of Palestine to the ruler of Egypt. One of his earliest actions after becoming governor of Egypt was to occupy the adjoining province. Then came those years of confusion when Ptolemy was fortunate in being able to keep the enemy out of Egypt. His first occupation of Palestine was not a long one. But he never gave up his plan. Whenever a favourable opportunity occurred in the course of the general conflict, he occupied it again. The enemy at that time was not Seleucus; it was before Seleucus had risen to his great power; it was another chief called Antigonus who was then master of Asia Minor and Northern Syria, and so long as Antigonus lived, Ptolemy and Seleucus were allies. At one time Seleucus took refuge in Egypt and commanded Ptolemy's fleet in the Mediterranean. At last, when Antigonus went down in 301 before a coalition of the other four chiefs, Ptolemy occupied Palestine for good. Seleucus got Northern Syria, and immediately the age-long quarrel between the two houses began. But it does not seem to have come to blows in the first generation, between the two old friends. We are told that Seleucus shrank from drawing his

*Antigono*

sword against the man who had once befriended him in his extreme peril, and confined himself to protests. One hopes that this is true : in those days of unbridled selfishness and violence, one likes to think that a nobler motive, a sense of human fellowship and of gratitude, sometimes deflected the policy of kings.

You can now see how the geographical position of Jerusalem brought the Jews into the brunt of the conflict when Ptolemy and Antigonos were contending for Palestine. One would like to have some record of the impression which the stupendous events of the last half-century had made upon those who watched them from the hill of Zion. The passing away of the Persian Empire, the irruption of these terrible strange men of the West, must have made it seem to contemporaries that the pillars of the earth were giving way. There is a story in Josephus that Alexander on his first passage through Palestine turned aside to visit Jerusalem and was solemnly received by the high-priest. But that story is recognised by scholars to be a late romance, of the sort the Jews were very fond of inventing a century or two later, to show the nations what honour they had received from the great kings of the past. In itself there would be nothing incredible that Alexander should have offered his homage to Jehovah, as he did to the gods of the nations, but the more trustworthy accounts of his campaigns indicate that as a matter of fact he pressed on into Egypt without any unnecessary delays.

We can very well divine, however, with what thoughts the religious among the Jews viewed the cataclysm. It was not the first time that they

had seen human greatness come to dust. If it is not possible for us to say definitely that any passage in the Hebrew writings was written with special reference to this moment, it is because the thoughts to which it might give rise—the nothingness of human power, the transcendent greatness of the God who lifted up and cast down, the God of Israel—were already familiar to their lips. The expression of such thoughts was too general with them to make it safe for us to assign the particular reference in some passages which might seem to reflect this time—

“God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of  
the sea.

The nations rage, the kingdoms are moved :  
He uttereth His voice, the earth melteth.  
The Lord of hosts is with us ;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.”

—PSALM xli.

This, at any rate, we know, that the trouble of the times reached Jerusalem, when Palestine was the gage of battle. The Jews saw the soldiers of Ptolemy, perhaps more than once, march in, and again, on compulsion, withdraw. The city seems on one occasion to have offered resistance, for we are told that Ptolemy took Jerusalem on a Sabbath day, when the Sabbath law prevented effectual defence, and dismantled it. After Ptolemy had definitely occupied Palestine in 301, a period of comparative peace may be supposed to have ensued ; for although the wars between the houses of Seleucus and Ptolemy began

*occupation  
of Palestine  
by Ptolemy*



in the next generation we do not hear of the Seleucid armies getting farther south, in the interior, than Damascus. But if it was peace, it was subjection to the Ptolemaic government.

The phases in the hundred-years' struggle between Ptolemy and Seleucid make up whatever external history the Jewish state has during that epoch. They are traced in the eleventh chapter of the book of *Daniel*. We have there the break-up of Alexander's empire, its division "towards the four winds of heaven"; the rise of Seleucus to great dominion; the truce in the struggle about 250, when Antiochus II. married the daughter of Ptolemy II.; the tragedy in which that truce too soon ended, and then the victorious march of the third Ptolemy into the heart of the Seleucid realm; the renewal of the conflict by Seleucus II. and his sons.

In all these vicissitudes the Jews were apparently passive spectators. They would often, looking down from their uplands upon the Philistian plain, have seen the long lines of King Ptolemy's army moving past against the king of the north, covering the country with its tents. The rumours of far-off battles, of the shifting policy of kings, would be matter of talk in the bazaars of Jerusalem. That is all that we can safely say.

In 223, a hundred years after the death of Alexander, there came to the Seleucid throne the man under whom the controversy was to be finally settled in favour of the northern kingdom—the third Antiochus, commonly known as Antiochus the Great. Antiochus waged two series of campaigns for the possession of Palestine. Already when he

began his first series of campaigns the times seemed favourable; for his contemporary on the Ptolemaïc throne was a feeble voluptuary, Ptolemy IV. Philopator. In fact by the end of 218 Palestine was already in the occupation of Antiochus. But his contempt of his adversary perhaps made him slack, so that when in 217, to the astonishment of the world, Ptolemy Philopator suddenly marched out of Egypt at the head of an army and joined battle with Antiochus on the confines of the desert at Raphia, Antiochus was signally defeated and all his gains of the preceding campaigns were lost at a blow. The disputed province went back to the house of Ptolemy during the rest of the lifetime of Philopator. When, in 205 or 204, Philopator died, and his son, an infant of four years, Ptolemy V. Epiphanes, came to the throne, Antiochus reopened war. We know next to nothing of the details of this second series of campaigns. But we know that the decisive battle was fought in 198 at the place where the road through the defiles of the Lebanon approaches the sources of the river Jordan—the battle of the Panium. There was a sanctuary of the god Pan close by, and the place is still called Banias. The Seleucid army was commanded by Antiochus himself and his eldest son; the Ptolemaïc army was commanded by a Greek called Scopas. Antiochus was victorious, and Palestine immediately passed finally to the house of Seleucus. The hundred-years' tenure of Palestine by the Ptolemies comes now to an end; the Seleucid kings are henceforth the kings with whom the Jews have to deal.

It would seem that Jerusalem welcomed this

198  
 Palestine  
 from the  
 Seleucids  
 at 198  
 Antioch

change of masters with delight, and it is curious to note in contrast that Gaza remained faithful to the end to the old rule and stood a siege by Antiochus which was one of the famous sieges of the time and made the world talk much of the stubborn fidelity of the Philistine city. No doubt the Jews hated to be under any Gentile power, and they hated the Ptolemaïc yoke especially because it was the yoke which had actually galled them for the last hundred years. Besides this it would seem that Scopas had put a garrison in Jerusalem during the late war, and this, of course, would be felt by the Jews as intolerable outrage. So that when Antiochus, as the book of *Daniel* puts it, "stood in the land of glory with destruction in his hand," he seemed to the Jews as a deliverer. Or perhaps we should say to a great part of the Jews, for there is an obscure verse in *Daniel* which suggests that the collapse of Ptolemaïc rule thrilled some bosoms with a wild hope.<sup>1</sup> Some people "lifted themselves up to establish a vision," and one thinks of a blow for freedom made in reliance on what seemed a prophetic oracle. At all events, any movement of the sort was quelled when Antiochus stood at the door. If the royal rescript given by Josephus is genuine (as Schürer still holds), Antiochus was received at Jerusalem by a festal procession of the citizens amid general goodwill, and in return conferred large privileges on the Temple and the nation. You must take such testimony for what it is worth, but I think it shows at the least that no unpleasant memories were connected in the mind of the Jewish people with their first coming under Seleucid rule.

<sup>1</sup> Dan. xi. 14.

## II

### HELLENISM AND HEBREW WISDOM

WE saw in our first lecture how the little community of Jews gathered about the Holy City found itself by a strange turn in the world's history brought into contact with a hitherto unfamiliar civilisation of a very potent kind—the civilisation of the Greeks. The seats of the new kingdoms, Alexandria and Antioch, were in closer geographical connection with Jerusalem than Babylon and Ecbatana, and the splendid courts of Ptolemy and Seleucid extended the sphere of their attraction over the neighbouring lands. We shall soon see that this attraction was not unfelt even in the Holy City, within sound of the solemn chants which declared the incomparable glory of the God of Israel. But courts were not the chief centres from which the new culture was propagated; there were others even nearer and far more general in their working, charging the very air men breathed with influences which subtly altered the temper of their souls, almost before they were aware.

You remember that Greek culture had been the product of city life. Its association with city life seemed in those days absolutely of its essence—perhaps under the conditions of those days it was so. At any rate the Greek could not conceive of his culture except as existing in city states, and

we often find this type of human association, the City, contrasted with the type which seemed natural to barbarians, the Village. The Greeks, for the purposes of the higher civilisation, were gathered in larger and more complex bodies; the barbarians, with lower needs, lived scattered over the fields they tilled in small groups of a much poorer sort of vitality. There were, of course, enormous conglomerations of men, like Babylon, but these, when Aristotle looked at them, did not seem real cities at all; they had no organic unity, no single life, and were mere multitudes held together by walls and external control. Perhaps this view of things, though broadly true, would require some modification in regard to some parts of the East, of which Syria was one. Here there had been cities before there existed such a people as the Greeks. And when Syria passed under the rule of the Greeks the ancient cities, as we saw in our first lecture, were there still—Hamath and Damascus, Tyre and Sidon, Ascalon and Gaza, Jericho and Jerusalem. But this is nevertheless true, that while the type of the City had been developed in these lands, before it was developed among the Greeks, it had remained stationary at a stage which the Greek cities had transcended. The Syrian city was already a political organism, with its own magistrates, kings or *shofets* or elders, and its own public opinion, which you might have heard expressed when men gathered in the open space about the gates—but it had never expanded to the same richness of life—political and intellectual—to the same complexity of functions, to the same quickness of movement and productive power, as the cities of the Hellenes.



Alexander had made it a part of his ambition to spread Hellenic culture in the East. He was followed in this by his successors. And you will see from what has just been said that this must necessarily mean the creation of cities. Accordingly, Alexander was a city-builder on a magnificent scale. He brought great masses of the drifting Greek soldatesca of the West—for the political troubles of those days had dislodged great numbers of Greeks from their homes and mercenary bands of soldiers were formed who sold their swords to any employer and promoted the general unrest—Alexander brought masses of these homeless Greeks, as well as of his own Macedonian veterans, and planted them in cities at all the critical points of the world's highways as far as India. Some of the places whose names are rich in association for us English to-day, were once cities peopled by Alexander from the Balkan Peninsula or the Greek states of the Mediterranean; we find the footsteps of Alexander in Merv and Herat and Kandahar.

In Syria Alexander and his successors pursued the same policy. But here at any rate they had not to begin, so to speak, to build from an absolutely new foundation. Here the ground had been prepared for them by the old city system of the land, and their work was not so much the creation of new cities as the conversion of the existing cities to the more developed Hellenic type. Sometimes, no doubt, a new city arose where only an obscure village had existed before, and we do not hear that Antioch itself, the most splendid of all, had any predecessor, unless it were a little mountain fastness on the summit of the hill which backed the royal city of

Seleucus. Sometimes an older city changed its name to correspond with its internal transformation; Chaleb became Berœa, and Nisibis Antioch, and the Old Testament Acco became Ptolemaïs. Even in cases like these the original name also lived on and ultimately survived the Greek, as you may see in the Aleppo and Acre of to-day. And we do not hear of any attempt to impose a new name upon Tyre or Sidon or Gaza or Damascus.

What did the conversion of a city to the Hellenic type imply? In some cases, no doubt, the entrance of a new element, Greek or Macedonian by blood, into the citizen body. Samaria, for instance, was repeopled by Alexander with Macedonians. In all cases the forms of public life must have been more or less modified after the Greek pattern; we should have found the citizen body electing its magistrates annually, and a definite number of the principal men sitting as a senate which resembled the *bulé* or *gerusia* in a Greek state. We should have seen the decrees of senate and people registered upon tables of bronze or stone. More momentous still were the innovations in the social and everyday life of the people. What is it that gives to the lives of men their distinctive character and content? It is what we call their interests, the determination of their thoughts and feelings upon certain objects or pursuits. Change these and the whole life acquires another complexion. Well, it is just in this that we see the chief operation of Hellenism; suddenly into the old limited life of the Syrian peoples new springs of interest are introduced; the pulses of men seem to beat quicker under new stimuli; new ideals awaken new passions:

satisfaction is sought and found in directions hitherto untried.

The first great interest which filled and informed the life of a Greek youth as he grew to manhood centred in the gymnasium. The gymnasiums were as much of the essence of a Greek state as the political assemblies. They expressed fundamental tendencies of the Greek mind—its craving for harmonious beauty of form, its delight in the body, its unabashed frankness with regard to everything natural, we might say that unsuspiciousness concerning nature, which, if man is indeed a double being, spirit and flesh at war, hardly corresponds to the maturer view, but which still to-day marks the Hellenic strain in our civilisation. The gymnasiums also served other by-ends beside the one of bodily training; they were the social centres, in which the life of a Greek youth got those interests which go with companionship, the spur of common ambitions, and *esprit de corps*. From the days of Alexander and his successors we find as a regular institution in Greek cities guilds of young men, called *epheboi*, attached to the gymnasiums and organised under state control. A young man might remain in the ranks of the *epheboi* for a year. He wore a distinctive uniform, some variety of that Greek country dress—the dress worn for hunting, riding, travelling—which consisted of a broad-brimmed hat, a *chlamys* brooches about the shoulders, and high-laced boots. But the wealth and pride of the city to which he belonged were told by the material of his garb, by its colour and embroidery. In state processions the body of *epheboi*, wearing sometimes even crowns of gold, formed a brilliant cluster in the spectacle.

The corporate life of the community equally provided the grown-up citizen with continual interests. Some of these were political, connected with the annual elections, with the public policy and administration of the state, with the formal assemblies of the people and the informal discussions of the *agora*; others were associated with the festivals celebrated by the city, and all the amusements and shows which went with them. In proportion as the independence of the city-states was circumscribed by the Hellenistic monarchies of Alexander and his successors—which was the case in varying degrees according to the circumstances of the time and the particular city—politics lost much of that fierce and exhausting interest which they had had for the Greeks of the age of freedom; and in that degree the excitements of the public festivals absorbed a larger share of the life of the communities. We should probably think of these festivals as being in the days after Alexander the main preoccupation of an ordinary Greek citizen. The amusements they involved consisted in large part of athletic games and horse races, so that a *stadium* and a *hippodrome* were, next after a gymnasium, the outward signs of a Hellenic or a Hellenised city. But the festivals also involved an entertainment of a higher sort, calling into play nobler faculties of feeling, imagination, and thought—I mean the drama, that form of poetical expression which had been developed as an abiding heritage for mankind by the Athenians of the fifth century. Every Greek city must hence forth also have its *theatre* hollowed, if possible, out of some neighbouring hillside. In the Hellenised cities of Asia many, no doubt, of the plays watched

by the people were poor stuff, inferior imitations of the great Athenian dramatists—to say nothing of such comedies as were frankly vile—but the plays of the great dramatists themselves, of Sophocles and Euripides at any rate, continued to be acted, as Shakespeare continues to be acted to-day; they did not cease to be a living power in the education of the Greek world.

The *stadium*, the *hippodrome*, the *theatre*—these appealed to all classes of citizens, to the general crowd; but in proportion as the mind of any man rose above the lower levels, the more potent and enduring part of Hellenism threw its spell over him. The Greek philosopher, the Greek artist, the Greek man of letters, now became figures met with in all the cities of the known world, drawing around them, if not as large a circle as were attracted to the festivals and games, at any rate all those who aspired, either from their social position or their mental endowments, to a higher culture, and indirectly moulding society through its leaders. Greek culture, Greek literature, were thrown open to the peoples of Nearer Asia, and they pressed into its pale. They had native literatures, but these in the new daylight looked poor and unformed: now those who wrote must write Greek, those who thought must think on the lines of Greek science and philosophy: so the result is that to-day we know more or less about many thinkers, to all intents and purposes Greek philosophers, who were natives of the old cities of the Phœnicians and Philistines; we have the 130 Greek love-poems of the Syrian Meleager, the witty Greek writings of the Syrian Lucian; but the old books which their



fathers had read and copied in the old tongues of the land, when Isaiah and Jeremiah were writing at Jerusalem, have perished for ever without leaving a memory.

Of course, Greek culture could not spread apart from the Greek language, so that Greek became the language of the educated all over the Eastern Mediterranean lands. It would be generally understood in Damascus, in Tyre, in Ascalon, after they had taken on the form of Greek cities. In the country villages of Syria native dialects, Aramaic or Canaanite, were perhaps the only language known; even in the cities such dialects lived on as languages of everyday life alongside of Greek, and we find Tyre and Sidon putting Punic legends, as well as Greek, upon their coins. But the native languages could not compare in prestige with Greek; for the higher purposes Greek was used almost exclusively.

If we had looked round about us there would have been a great deal in the Syrian cities of those days to show us the predominance of the new power. We have spoken of the gymnasium as an institution; well, as a building, the gymnasium would have shown us the familiar forms of classical architecture. The new political organisation would require new buildings—a hall for the senate and such like; and the new social life would create the indispensable *stoas*, cool pillared galleries for lounging, and all these would be Greek in form. Dress too would be then as now inseparable as an outward symbol from the particular form of civilisation. And if to-day our hideous European clothes tend to displace the beautiful old garments among the

richer classes in Japan or India, simply because a prestige belongs to our hard black hats and drab cylindrical coverings as the token of the ruling civilisation, how much more when the ruling civilisation had a worthy garb, would it be felt a dignity to wear it! We should have seen the *epheboi* of Tyre or Ascalon with their broad-brimmed Greek hat and fluttering chlamys, and the richer men and women not easy to distinguish by their appearance from their contemporaries in Ephesus or Athens. When that power we call fashion sets in a particular direction, you know how it breaks down all conventions, how it masters the younger generations.

I like to dwell on this subject, because you are so often told in popular books that "the East never changes," that orientals have an invincible repugnance to western ideas, and so forth. And Scripture pictures are supposed to show their fidelity to fact in proportion as they are copied from what you see in Palestine to-day. Well, you would make a great mistake if you imagined, say, the Damascus of Saint Paul's time like the Damascus of to-day. In Saint Paul's time we should have found ourselves in a Greek city. Arabs from the desert in native dress would no doubt have appeared in the streets, and Jews with their fringes and phylacteries, but we should have seen the citizens of the upper class to all appearance Greek, we should continually have heard Greek talked around us, and the environment would be largely made up of Greek temples and halls and colonnades.

Hitherto I have spoken of Greek civilisation, of Hellenism, as if it were all one thing; I have spoken of it as the superior, the more vital, civilisation, in

contrast to the old life of Syria. But one must guard oneself against a misunderstanding. The qualities of Hellenism had their necessary defects, and under certain circumstances Hellenism could take on forms which were very far from lovely. Its political vitality, for instance, even in its best days, was continually running into partisan *ven-dettas*, and the history of the Greek states does not want its list of atrocities. Or take such an institution as the gymnasium which we were considering just now. In its ideal there is an obvious beauty. The body developed to its highest perfection of harmony, agility and strength is an end good in itself. The training involved a high degree of asceticism, and there is something of moral nobility in the figure of the athlete as the old sculptors loved to fashion it. Lucian makes some one point to the primitive statues, "tight-strung, sinewy, hard, clean in outline,"<sup>1</sup> to prove the necessity of "painful effort, abstinence from sleep and wine, and spare living." Saint Paul goes to the gymnasium for a simile to present the Christian life: "He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." Well that was the ideal, but there were other things often connected with the gymnasium in actual practice, as every student of the classics knows, which are of very evil savour. Even apart from these, the cult of the athlete grew to such proportions in the Hellenic world, that already Euripides could speak of it as a public nuisance. Is it after all the accomplishment to be most honoured and rewarded in a citizen, he

<sup>1</sup> ἀπασφισμένα καὶ νευρώδη καὶ σκληρὰ καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἀποτεταμένα ταῖς γραμμαῖς.—Lucian, *Rhetor. Præcept.* 9.

makes one of his characters ask, that he should be an expert wrestler, or a good runner, or able to throw a discus or strike an opponent's jaw in handsome style?<sup>1</sup> You can see how easily it might come about under certain conditions that the abuses of the gymnasium should be more prominent than its ideal nobleness. And so it is with the other constituents of Hellenism. Its ideal was a real power; its ideal made its attraction for nobler minds; but its actual embodiment might show all degrees of degradation.

Now we have reason to believe that it was just in Syria that Hellenism took a baser form. The ascetic element which saved its liberty from rankness tended here more than anywhere else to be forgotten. The games, the shows, the abandonment of a life which ran riot in a gratification of the senses, grosser or more refined, these made up too much of the Hellenism which changed the face of Syria in the last centuries before Christ. "The people of these cities," a historian wrote, about a hundred years before Christ, "are relieved by the fertility of their soil from a laborious struggle for existence. Life is a continuous series of social festivities. Their gymnasiums they use as baths, where they anoint themselves with costly oils and myrrhs. In the *grammateia* (such is the name they give the public eating-halls) they practically live, filling themselves there for the better part of the day with rich foods and wine; much that they cannot eat they carry away home. They feast to the prevailing music of strings. The cities are filled from end to end with the noise of harp-

<sup>1</sup> Eur. *Frag.* 284.

playing." Very likely that picture is over-coloured; you must remember that the man who wrote it, Posidonius, a man of huge literary industry and a philosopher of the nobler school, was himself a Syrian Greek; but it cannot be altogether untrue.

But it is time to turn our thoughts to Jerusalem. You can realise now something of what it meant for the Jewish community—this change of their environment by an agent so far-reaching as Hellenism. This was quite a different ordeal from any to which they had been subjected under the old unprogressive oriental dynasties. The strange transforming influence, which won so easy a victory over the native traditions of other Syrian peoples, Aramæans, Phœnicians, Philistines, reached to Jerusalem also. But at Jerusalem this influence, powerful and subtle as it was, encountered an antagonist which could bring from a world outside the domain of Hellenism a unique power of resistance. You know some modern writers, like Matthew Arnold, are fond of representing our own culture to-day as involving in itself the great antithesis of Hellenism and Hebraism. Well, here, for the first time in history Hellenism and Hebraism meet. The little community on the Judæan hills which maintained something of an eccentric indifference to the movements of the time, which seemed intrenched in a mass of mysterious observances, sabbaths and rules of food, began to attract the curiosity of Greek inquirers. The first references we have in Greek to the Jews come from writers of the third century B.C., in the early days of Macedonian rule. They speak of them as a race of "philosophers"; that is to say, the nearest analogies to the Jewish com-



munity they could find, were philosophic brotherhoods like the Pythagorean or orders of men like the Indian Brahmins, who also had their peculiar rules of cleanness and diet. One theory was that they were actually a colony of Brahmins to start with; another theory was that they were of Egyptian origin.

The resistance offered by the Jews to Hellenism attracted notice by its contrast to the readiness with which the orientals generally adopted the new way of life. But the degree of resistance was relative only: even here there were large sections of the nation who in some degree succumbed. "In recent times," says a Greek observer of the first half of the third century, "under the foreign rule of the Persians, and then of the Macedonians, by whom the Persian Empire was overthrown, intercourse with other races has led to many of the traditional Jewish ordinances losing their hold."<sup>1</sup> And if it is true that even under the Persians influences from outside had been felt in Jerusalem, how much more must it be so now!

Think, for instance, of the attractions to commerce, in days when the commerce of the world had received an extraordinary stimulus, when such a great mercantile centre as Alexandria had been created a few days' journey from Jerusalem. It could not be but that the Jew should begin to drift into the new cities in order to trade, and if he still adhered to the piety of coming to Jerusalem for the great feasts, he brought back with him the atmosphere of another world. There was at this time no Diaspora, no dispersed multitude of Jews, such

<sup>1</sup> Hecataeus of Abdera, quoted by Diodorus, xl. 3.

as existed two centuries later, but already probably in the third century B.C. the number of Jews resident in Egypt was considerable; it must have been so, if, as is thought, the translation of the Law into Greek, the nucleus of the Septuagint, goes back to this time, for that, of course, implies a large body of Jews who have come to use Greek as their natural tongue. And just in proportion as the Egyptian Jews kept up their connection with the Holy City, would they be intermediaries between the Hellenic world and their own people.

The priestly class at Jerusalem had grown rich upon the offerings of the people; the state was ruled by an aristocracy of great families under the presidency of the high-priest. Conceive the position of a young man of one of these families with the ordinary ambitions of a young man to make a glittering figure, and ample means at his disposal. Think with what power the lively world of festivals and pomps which lay so near at hand, let him but descend from his grey hills into one of those Philistian cities below, would appeal to him; how insensibly the estimates of things, the canons of public opinion, which prevailed in the Hellenistic world, would urge him to show what he could do! The poor man who tilled his field outside the walls of Jerusalem, the artisan who plied his trade in the Holy City,—there might be for these small temptation to forsake the Law of their God; it was otherwise with the rich, with those who dwelt at ease in Zion, whose wider outlook upon the world suggested ambitions which their money brought within their grasp.

Even at the courts of kings there was a prospect for a young Jew with wealth and brains. We have

no connected history of the Jewish community in the days before Judas Maccabæus, but in place of it we have the popular stories which are preserved by Josephus as throwing a lustre upon his people, and which celebrate the social successes of rich young Jews at the court of King Ptolemy. In these stories the Jewish people preserved a memory of that family which in the days of Ptolemaïc rule held Jerusalem spell-bound by their wealth and pride, the sons of Tobiah. Do you think of the little state whose God was the Lord shining as a light amid heathen darkness? I am afraid there would have been a great deal to disappoint you in Jerusalem.

The high-priest of those days, the story opens by telling us, was a man whose one real concern was money. According to the practice of the realm, the tribute of the Jewish state to the Egyptian government was paid in a lump sum of twenty silver talents annually by the high-priest. Under the reign of this high-priest, the payment fell into arrear. The Ptolemaïc court threatened to turn Jerusalem into a military colony, but the high-priest did not much care what happened to Jerusalem or the Jews, so long as he might keep his money. Of course, the description of this villainous old man leads up to the introduction of the hero of the story. He is the son of the high-priest's sister, and, on his father's side, of the house of Tobiah, a young man called Joseph, highly esteemed by the people, "for seriousness, prudence, and righteousness," obviously a character held up for our admiration. When the alarm got abroad of what hung over the people, Joseph came forward. He told his uncle he certainly ought to go to the court to plead with the

The story  
of Tobiah

offended king. But the high-priest's cynical indifference made all remonstrance hopeless. Then Joseph asked whether he might be sent himself as envoy, and, when his uncle agreed readily enough, he at once set to work for the salvation of his people. He first of all laid himself out to give such an entertainment to the king's envoy, that the man went back to Alexandria loud in his praises. Then Joseph went down himself to Egypt, with a train of animals carrying splendid raiment and silver plate and money to the amount of some 20,000 drachmas which he had borrowed from his friends. It was at the moment when many of the principal men of Coele-Syria and Phœnicia—from that part of Syria, you understand, subject to King Ptolemy—were going up to Alexandria to bid for the right of farming the provincial taxes for the ensuing year. These rights were sold by the common custom of antiquity to the highest bidder; the tax-farmer contracted to pay a certain sum down to the government and then kept for himself whatever he could raise from the taxes over and above it. Joseph maintained a very humble appearance as he journeyed with these grandees; he allowed them to make merry over his poverty: they did not know what the bales upon his animals' backs contained. In Egypt, he at once sought the king, and was introduced with enthusiasm by the late envoy to Jerusalem. The Jewish story now depicts proudly the terms of jovial familiarity on which Joseph associated with royalty. When the day came for the auction of the taxes, Joseph undertook to farm the taxes for the whole province at a figure double that bid by the magnates, whom he roundly accused of having made a ring to

defraud the government. The king inquired of Joseph whom he could name as his guarantors for so large a sum, and Joseph immediately named the king and queen themselves. Ptolemy was quite overcome by this sally of wit; he thought Joseph the most delightful young man; the tender was accepted.

Then came days of horror for the cities of Southern Syria. The harrying of the Gentiles by those of the chosen people is another motive to which the Jewish popular stories of those times continually recur. Joseph was authorised by the king to enforce his demands by a band of 2000 soldiers, and he had the cities at his mercy. At Ascalon, when his demands were opposed, he executed the twenty chief men of the city out of hand. He acted in the same drastic way at Scythopolis. The other cities in terror paid all he asked. This young man, so shining an example of "seriousness, prudence, and righteousness," grew very rich. But in his wealth he did not forget to go on paying court to the great; the king and queen of Egypt, and every one who had influence at court were kept in good humour by an unfailing stream of well-placed gifts.

For two-and-twenty years, the story says, Joseph went on growing rich at the expense of the province. Sometimes the figure of this assertive Jew might be seen at the royal feasts in Alexandria. Once when he was there with his brother Solymius, a dancing girl of the king's awoke his passion, and he begged his brother to help him to compass his desires. But here Solymius had a conscience; the Law forbade a *liaison* with a Gentile. He adroitly agreed, and then substituted his own daughter, Joseph being



too drunk to perceive the deception. And his piety was rewarded; for Joseph's unlawful passion was soon replaced by an attachment to his niece, a true-born Jewess. She was the mother of his son Hyrcanus, who now becomes himself the leading character of the story.

We need not pursue the fortunes of Hyrcanus. His feats are of the same sort as his father's, and again the qualities of the hero are his audacity of resource in pushing his way at the Egyptian court, his eclipsing of the Gentile courtiers by the astounding scale of his expenditure, the easy familiarity he uses toward the king. In the end, we are told, Hyrcanus quarrelled with his half-brothers, the sons of Joseph by another wife, and was driven from Jerusalem. He then set up for himself as a petty chieftain in the hills beyond Jordan. The wonderful stronghold which Josephus describes as his dwelling, consisting in part of passages hewn out of the living rock, is a real place. Its remains, at a place called Arâk-el-Emir, can be seen by travellers to-day. Hyrcanus committed suicide when the cause of Antiochus Epiphanes prevailed in Syria.

These stories of Joseph and Hyrcanus are not history. Many of the details, as Josephus gives them, are quite irreconcilable with the facts of history. But that they do in some sort reflect real events of the days of Ptolemaïc ascendancy in Palestine I think you may take as certain. Whatever the proportion of history and romance may be in their composition, they help us to understand what is so much more important than the sort of facts contained in a historical handbook; they retain for us something of the spirit and complexion of the days

when the sons of Tobiah were great in Jerusalem. Perhaps the Ptolemaïc court was never subjugated by the free airs and blunt jests of a gilded Jew quite as the stories represent ; but a light is thrown upon the estimates of things, upon the ambitions and the manners, which prevailed in the Jewish aristocracy. In that respect I think you will feel the picture has a dreadful verisimilitude. The repulsive faces of Joseph and Hyrcanus seem to have looked out upon us elsewhere.

Fortunately the Jewish people did not consist only of its rich men. There were other elements in the community, to whom the sons of Tobiah were as great an abhorrence as they might be to any of us. It is not through these stories alone that we can look into that world of pre-Maccabæan Jerusalem. In the early years of the second century B.C. a book was put forth in the old Hebrew tongue, which we can still read, some of it in the lately re-discovered original, and some only in a Greek translation made by the author's grandson. It is familiar to you by name as the book called *Ecclesiasticus*.

The author of this book, Jeshua Ben-Sira, or, as the Greek version transcribes his name, Jesus the son of Sirach, belonged to the class of people called "wise men" (*hakāmîm*) or "scribes" (*sōpherîm*). It is in their circles that what is called the "Wisdom" literature was cultivated—the literature of which we have examples in *Proverbs*, *Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, and the book before us ; but we do not know nearly as much about these schools of Wise Men as we should like to know—for instance, in what form they existed in the days of Isaiah and the old prophets. At the time of Ben-Sira a teacher would

already hold his school in some definite place—a “house of research (*beth-hamidrash*)” as it was called—just as we find the rabbis doing two and three centuries later. But the scribe of Ben-Sira’s age does not seem to have been like the scribe of the New Testament. The business of the New Testament scribe was mainly legal, fixing with indefatigable minuteness, according to the tradition of the elders, exactly how the general commands of the Law were to be applied to the infinitely various circumstances of life—what actions broke and what did not break the Sabbath day, what constituted ceremonial defilement, and so on. We find nothing of this in Ben-Sira. When he speaks of the commandments of God, he thinks of “judgment, mercy, and faith” rather than of the tithes of mint and anise and cummin. And the scribe was to look round upon life, not to find difficult cases for his legal subtilty, but to observe the broad principles which governed the action of individuals and of society, the characteristic features of human nature, the chain of cause and effect in the moving world. He was to take as his guide in doing so the mass of “brief sententious precepts” which came down to him from former sages, but he was not to be satisfied with mere repetition. His own observation was to add to the store for those to come. “They that were of understanding in sayings became also wise themselves, and poured forth apt proverbs.”<sup>1</sup>

You will see how a book of this kind is exactly what we want in order to lift the veil from the Jerusalem of 200 B.C. Apart from its value as a religious document, you will realise its value for the

<sup>1</sup> xviii. 29; cf. xxi. 15.

historian, when you consider that Greek culture, as I said just now, effaced all the old literatures of Syria and Phœnicia, except the Jewish; so that everywhere else we can only look back upon those times through a Greek medium; only here we get a standpoint independent of the Hellenic, for surveying the life of ancient Syria. Let us see what we can gain by entering for a little, as far as we can do so, into the mind and the outlook of Jeshua Ben-Sira.

And first notice the character of the mental process by which the Hebrew sage acquires and registers his experience. Among all peoples who have produced literatures the first movements of reflection about life have been the same in principle—the impulse of the understanding to seize upon the general laws, the abiding uniformities, which run through the many-coloured, shifting, perplexed web of human life. These general laws once grasped, a man can choose his way with better security, and it is not so much the scientific impulse to understand for the sake of understanding, as the need to get clews of practical utility for the maze of life, which urges the primitive sage. Each uniformity, as it strikes him, he declares in the way by which the truth can best bite into the apprehension of the community, be remembered and handed on; his utterance must be brief, telling, and, if possible, rhythmical. That is to say, he is a maker of proverbs; for to be brief and telling is of the essence of the proverb, and it tends to have some rhythm or jingling sound. You see the primitive sage is really a sort of poet rather than a sort of philosopher. Like the poet, he delivers his thought

with an oracular authority, not with argumentative justification; like the poet his utterance tends to be rhythmical and pictorial. On the lips of old bards in dim forgotten ages we may believe that the first proverbs of a people generally took their rise; and proverb-making has gone on in all ages being a special prerogative of the poets. Of course, there are differences between the old homely saws, whose form may get no nearer to the poetical than a rude assonance, and whose first author nobody knows any more, and the utterances a well-known writer in a cultivated world-worn community, but there is a continuity between them, and I do not see that we can draw a hard and fast line anywhere in the process of proverb-making.

The production of proverbs, of disconnected aphorisms, does not constitute philosophy. That implies yet another step. The general principles elicited by the philosopher must themselves be further unified by being ordered in a connected system, a system whose parts are held together by logical argument. His ideas must no more have the vague edges of a poetical halo, but the sharp outlines of a definition. This step was never made by the Jews till Greek influence had done its work upon them. There is no philosophy, properly speaking, in the Old Testament, though there is the material for a great deal of philosophy. For the purposes of the revelation God had to make in the books of the Old Testament, the forms of poetry and proverb were enough. In fact, Hebrew as a living language was altogether unadapted for philosophy; its simple unpliable structure, which makes it so perfect an organ for solemn enunciation and



majestic prophecy, unfits it to be the vehicle of complex reasoning.

These considerations help us to class the productions of the Hebrew Wise Men according to their real affinities. Jeshua Ben-Sira was content to go on working on the old traditional lines. He was no great original genius, no plougher of strange deeps; but that in a way increases his value to us. It makes him a better index of the mental habit, the circle of ideas, which marked the solid central law-abiding mass of the citizens of Jerusalem. In my belief, one cannot discover in him any sure touch of that Greek thought which was conquering the minds of men in the Gentile cities hard by, and in God's providence preparing forms for Christian thought in days to come. All is of the old pattern. We tried just now to imagine the fascination that Greek culture would have for a young man going out into the world; here we have the fashion and atmosphere of his Hebrew home, the sort of counsels he would have heard from the greybeards in Jerusalem, the wisdom of the fathers.

There is a great resemblance in the proverbial morality, the standards of good living recognised as valid by the ordinary man, among all civilised peoples. Everywhere we find in this domain the same sort of virtues given prominence, the virtues which occur to us in connection with the words "respectability," "propriety," "moderation," "prudence," "honesty." The virtues of repression, of inhibiting the leaps of passion, of steadying the pulses, of checking the tongue, are more had in mind than the great works, the divine imprudences, in which virtue at its highest power shines forth. A great value is

attached to a good name, to commanding the respect of the community ; the consciousness of those encompassing eyes, of those tongues which dispense the public verdict, is never away. "Get thyself the love of the congregation,"<sup>1</sup> says Ben-Sira. "Incur not the condemnation of the assembly at the gate, and suffer not thyself to slip in the midst of the congregation." "His prosperity shall be made sure," he says of the good man, "and the congregation shall declare his righteousness."<sup>3</sup>

It is of the same level of thought that the sage constantly enforces his advice by considerations of profit and loss in the sphere of worldly good, in the spirit of our own proverb that "honesty is the best policy." For instance, with regard to profligacy he warns us, "Fall not into the power of thy appetite, lest it devour thy substance like a grazing ox ; lest it consume thy body and root up thy fruit, and leave thee as a dry tree. For a headstrong appetite destroyeth him that hath gotten it, and maketh him a laughingstock to his enemies."<sup>4</sup> Or again on miserliness, "He that stinteth himself, gathereth for another, and glutteth a stranger with his goods. . . . There is none more evil than he that envieth himself, but the punishment for his ill-doing he suffereth at his own hands."<sup>5</sup> This sort of reasoning belongs, of course, to the common stock of all

<sup>1</sup> iv. 7.

Wherever possible I have corrected the English translation of Ben-Sira in my quotations by reference to the Hebrew. Except in one case which I specify, my quotations follow the text as it is given by Dr. N. Peters in his edition (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902).

<sup>2</sup> vii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> xxxi. 11.

<sup>4</sup> vi. 2 f. The Greek translation, which our English translators had before them, is quite out in this passage.

<sup>5</sup> xiv. 4, 6.

moralising and could be paralleled in the literature of all lands.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the good man, as Ben-Sira depicts him, considers only the human observers or the effect of his actions in the course of nature. He is far more possessed and governed by the consciousness of the Heavenly Eye to whom all his being lies open. The fear and the hope which determine his action have mainly reference to this awful abiding Presence. Ben-Sira repeats the ground-principle of the old Hebrew wisdom, "To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, is the fulness of wisdom."<sup>1</sup> The thought that God will visit for the sins which men cannot see is, of course, found all the world over: here again the Hebrew sage treads the common path of all primitive wisdom. But although we find the idea of God as the Protector of righteousness among the heathen, it is clouded by the utterly inconsistent notions of popular mythology, from which it can never free itself in the mind of the general multitude, and so could not have the same breadth and power of operation as among that people upon whom it shone, so to speak, out of a bare sky. With the Greeks, for instance, it was there, but could not assert itself effectively against the popular mythology, or later on against the pervading scepticism: with the people to whom Ben-Sira spoke it was dominant.

And yet the reward of right-doing is after all with Ben-Sira good to be realised in this world; for he knows of none beyond. This need not surprise you, when you reflect that the belief in a future

<sup>1</sup> i. 14, 16.

life with rewards and penalties did not take hold of the Jewish people till after his day. There was nothing expressly said about it in the Law or the Prophets which lay before Ben-Sira. The book of *Proverbs*, which Ben-Sira had for his model, in no passage indicates that the recompenses for good and evil are to be allotted anywhere but in this life.<sup>1</sup> Even in the time of our Lord, as you will remember, the Sadducees, the party who took their stand on dry old-fashioned religion and the letter of Scripture, would hear nothing of disembodied spirit or resurrection. Death to Ben-Sira is the end of everything for the individual man. But he bids us, like Horace, regard it with cheerful acquiescence as the fixed law of the world. "Be not affrighted at death thy lot, remember them that have been before thee and that come after. This is the lot of all flesh from the Lord; wherefore dost thou push from thee the ordinance of the Most High? Be it a thousand years or a hundred or ten, there is no grievance concerning life among the dead."<sup>2</sup> This is his advice to a mourner: "My son, let thy tears fall over the dead, make mourning and intone the lamentation. Wind up his body according to his due, and neglect not his burial. Make bitter weeping and make passionate wailing, and perform mourning, as his right is, for one day or two, *lest thou be evil spoken of*, then

<sup>1</sup> There are passages in our English Proverbs which would seem to disprove the statement of the text. A reference however to a modern commentary such as Professor Toy's will show that either the English reposes upon a corrupt text, like Proverbs xii. 28, or that the reference to a future life is highly problematical.

<sup>2</sup> xli. 3, 4.

be comforted concerning the sorrow. . . . Turn not thy heart after him; let him go his way and remember the last end. Forget not that he hath no more expectation; him thou shalt not profit and thou wilt hurt thyself. Consider his lot that it is thy lot also, his yesterday and thine to-day. When the dead resteth, let thy thought of him also rest, and be comforted in the going away of his soul."<sup>1</sup>

This is a strain which in our day you would expect to go with a dreary atheism. But Ben-Sira is of an unclouded, a fervent piety. The sphere of God's judgments is the present life only, but we cannot, this is the fundamental principle of his morality, we cannot make the best of this present life, unless we have God on our side. In certain cases indeed the consequences of a particular kind of action—of profligacy, as we saw, or miserliness—were immediate and obvious, the nexus between doing and suffering was a natural necessity. But there were many forms of action whose ultimate consequences were not so plain, if one only had the course of nature to reckon with. There were cases in which a man might say "I sinned, and what happened unto me?"<sup>2</sup> Well, it was just here that wisdom showed itself. The wise man realised that the important thing to take into account, in order to make a success of life, was the nexus between certain sorts of action and certain consequences brought about by the personal intervention of God; to have God on one's side was everything, to have this great Power set against one was certain ruin. This is what is meant by saying that the beginning,

<sup>1</sup> xxxviii. 16 f.<sup>2</sup> v. 4.



the fundamental essence, of wisdom is the fear of the Lord; again and again Ben-Sira insists that to keep the divine commandments is the only safe road. Many, as we saw, in the Jerusalem of that day were throwing off the ancestral Law; through the pages of this book we get a glimpse of the proud rich men, whose "heart is turned from their Creator,"<sup>1</sup> who devour the needy and mock at the crying of the poor,<sup>2</sup> who may be known in the streets by their arrogant port, their costly raiment, and that dreadful smile in which the cruel teeth gleam white.<sup>3</sup> Those who saw these men pass might be tempted to think it was they who had the best of it in the world, to "envy the wicked man."<sup>4</sup> The sage knows better; he knows that the Power who rules the world allots to every man good and evil according to his deed.<sup>5</sup>

But how can such a belief stand for a moment against the facts of the world? Ben-Sira has heard this objection, but he has his answer ready. And it is "Look at the end."<sup>6</sup> We shall never find a case, he assures us, in which judgment does not overtake the wicked *before he dies*.<sup>7</sup> The prosperity in which we may see him at any particular moment is a deceptive appearance; let us be patient and watch, for God is often slow, but he will act at last.<sup>8</sup> The judgment of the wicked man may come when he seems most secure; "a whisper of sickness, the face of the physician shines—king to-day, and to-morrow dead!"<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the good man is always adequately rewarded in the long run.

<sup>1</sup> x. 12.<sup>4</sup> ix. 11; xi. 21.<sup>7</sup> ix. 12; xxvii. 29.<sup>2</sup> xiii. 19; xxxv. 13 f.<sup>5</sup> xvi. 12.<sup>8</sup> v. 4; xi. 21.<sup>3</sup> xix. 30.<sup>6</sup> vii. 36.<sup>9</sup> x. 10.

"Look at the generations of old, and see: who did ever put his trust in the Lord, and was ashamed?"<sup>1</sup> "For every one that doeth righteousness there is a reward, and each man shall find according to his works."<sup>2</sup> Ben-Sira asserts the curious theory that in making our estimate of lives, the end is all that should be taken into account: it is what men finally come to before their extinction that matters, not the quality of their life as a whole. "The happiness of the day causeth the former evil to be forgotten, and the evil of the day causeth the happiness to be forgotten. For it is easy in the eyes of the Lord at the end to recompense a man according to his doing. A time of evil causeth pleasure to be forgotten, and it is the end of a man that pronounceth concerning him. Before his death call no man happy, for in his ending is a man made known."<sup>3</sup>

"Ah, yes," you might say, "but if the good man dies like the bad man at last, where is any great difference between their lots?" "In the name which the good man leaves behind him," answers Ben-Sira, and I think you will never understand his position, to us so strange, if you do not grasp the extraordinary value he attaches to reputation. It may seem an absurdity to care what men say about you, when you are in the land where all things are forgotten, but it is an absurdity which in our own day men commit (and surely they are to be found?) who without a belief in a future life yet are determined by the desire for posthumous fame. Well, to Ben-Sira, it seems to make up for almost anything the good man may suffer, if, after he is gone, his name is still passed to and fro when men assemble

<sup>1</sup> ii. 10.<sup>2</sup> xvi. 14.<sup>3</sup> xi. 25-28.

in the evenings about the gate, and good things are said of him. Here the great difference is marked between the righteous and the wicked. "All that is of dust returneth unto dust again; even so the ungodly man passeth out of nothingness into nothingness. Man is a vain breath in respect of his body; only the name of the pious shall not be cut off. Take thought for the name; for that it is that remaineth to thee, longer than thousands of goodly treasures. The good things of life are only for a tale of days; but the good of the name is for days untold."<sup>1</sup>

These two things then of supreme value—a happy ending and a good name—are attached indissolubly to the keeping of the commandments. The attachment is safeguarded by the personal action of the Author of the commandments. For the Author of the commandments is the Author of the world, and the Wisdom embodied in the commandments is the Wisdom diffused through the world.<sup>2</sup> Yes, the Hebrew sage feels vividly that this Law handed down among his people, is no mere code of a single small race, not even merely of the earth, but the incarnation, if one may say so, of a cosmic principle and akin to the stars. He feels Israel to be the centre of all things, the eventual heir of the ages. Over other nations the Creator set inferior powers of the unseen world to rule them, but Israel he chose for his own portion.<sup>3</sup> He employs that wonderful figure of the Divine Wisdom personified, familiar in the schools of Wise Men, the primeval Wisdom of the universe. "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth as a mist. I dwelt in high places, and my

<sup>1</sup> xli. 10-13.<sup>2</sup> i. 9.<sup>3</sup> xvii. 17.

throne was in the pillar of the cloud. Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the depth of the abyss. In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth and in every people and nation I wrought, creating. With all these I sought rest, and in whose inheritance, said I, shall I lodge? Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment; and he that created me made my tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy tabernacle be in Jacob and thine inheritance in Israel."<sup>1</sup> This is indeed throwing down the challenge to the pretensions of any foreign culture!

Standing in this peculiar relation to the universe, the Hebrew is kindled with a feeling almost of intimate affection in praising the works of God. The beauty of the natural world is seldom made, in itself and directly, an object of praise in ancient literature: I do not know whether it is anywhere else praised so rapturously and lovingly as in this book, which is in so large part a handbook of social propriety and pedestrian worldly wisdom. It would take too long to read you now the great hymn of praise in the 42nd and 43rd chapters, but notice, for instance, this bit of a winter landscape: "He causeth the snow to come down like things of feathers, and its descent is as the alighting of locusts. The dazzling whiteness thereof confoundeth the eyes, and the heart is moved at its falling. The hoar-frost also he sprinkleth abroad like salt, and maketh the pine-needles to sparkle as with jewels."<sup>2</sup> There is something almost modern in the sudden definiteness of that last touch; unhappily it was lost in the Greek version and therefore in our English Bibles.

<sup>1</sup> xxiv. 3-8.

<sup>2</sup> xliii. 17-19.

*The  
idea*

Ben-Sira passes easily from his ideal heights to the ordinary life of men. About the family he has a good deal to say which is interesting, and opens to our glance a Jewish interior. He has a high estimate of the value of family life. "Get thee a wife, there is nought more worth the getting, a help meet for thee and a pillar of support. Where no hedge is, the vineyard is laid waste, and where no wife is, there is no settlement or abiding."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand he is convinced that most women are bad, and holds up a dreadful picture of what marriage, without exceptional prudence and the favour of God, will probably turn out. "The badness of a woman changeth the aspect of her husband and maketh his face dark as a bear's. Among his friends sitteth the husband, and without motive he sighs. There is little badness like the badness of a woman; let the portion of a sinner fall on her!"<sup>2</sup> He warns husbands to keep an inventory in black and white of all household stores, and a careful account of all incomings and outgoings, so that they may have their wives under control.<sup>3</sup> In his advice as to the education of children, the rod, as in the book of *Proverbs*, holds a principal place.<sup>4</sup> The frequent castigation of their children is one of those things of which men are told not to be ashamed.<sup>5</sup> To smile or look familiarly at son or daughter is a fatal mistake. "Cocker thy child, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he will grieve thee. Laugh not with him, lest thou have sorrow with him; and thou shalt gnash thy teeth in the end."<sup>6</sup> The evil propensities of daughters he describes in

<sup>1</sup> xxxvi. 24, 25.<sup>2</sup> xxv. 17-19.<sup>3</sup> xlii. 6, 7.<sup>4</sup> xxx. 11-13.<sup>5</sup> xlii. 5.<sup>6</sup> xxx. 9, 10; vii. 24.



language of a repellent coarseness, which one hopes was not justified by the manners of Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> and he advises that a daughter's apartment do not have a window upon the street or be in direct communication with the general entrance.<sup>2</sup> With regard to that other essential element in the ancient family, the slave, Ben-Sira delivers himself thus: "Fodder, a stick and burdens for an ass; bread and discipline and work for a household slave. Set thy slave to work, and thou shalt find rest; leave his hands idle, and he will seek liberty. Yoke and thong will bow the neck; and for an evil slave there are racks and tortures. Send him to labour, that he be not idle; for idleness teacheth much mischief. Set him to work, as is fit for him; and if he obey not, make his fetters heavy."<sup>3</sup> The worthy citizen of Jerusalem is here quite in agreement with the standard *pater-familias* of old Rome; Cato the Elder was noted for his fierce handling of his slaves. But Ben-Sira is careful to enjoin on the other side that a limit in torturing should be observed, and that, apart from deserved punishments, to care well for a slave is a master's interest. After all, he sensibly observes, you have spent money in buying him; if you treat him too badly he will run away, and you may have a difficulty in finding him again.<sup>4</sup>

But although the sage wears so austere a countenance at home, he by no means abjures the pleasures and festivities of life. He takes his enjoyment heartily, and would recognise "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" as a perfectly sound maxim.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> xxvi. 12.    <sup>2</sup> xlii. 11.    <sup>3</sup> xxxiii. 24-28.    <sup>4</sup> xxxiii. 29-31.

<sup>5</sup> xiv. 11-17. "My son, if thou hast anything, do good to thyself, and, according to thy power, cherish thyself in sleekness." The grand-

Yet through all he holds himself prepared for reverses of fortune, wary of leaning too much upon circumstances and especially wary of so far forgetting himself as to make God his enemy. "A wise man will fear in everything."<sup>1</sup> Ben-Sira dined out with pleasure where there was a good table, and he had a taste for wine.<sup>2</sup> He seems also to have had an especial delight in music,<sup>3</sup> and you could not annoy him more than by chattering while the musicians at a feast were performing.<sup>4</sup> But he warns us strongly against excess in food and drink, and describes with pathetic exactness the miseries of a night which follows too generous a meal.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes, of course, one's host practically compels one to eat too much; in that case he recommends what was a common accompaniment of feasts in those days—prompt recourse to an emetic.<sup>6</sup> He gives other hints for deportment at table. Do not, as soon as you sit down, crane out your neck, and exclaim: "What a lot there is on the table!" When you see your host's eye travel to any morsel, beware of seizing it before him. Do not gulp down your food greedily. Do not stretch your hand across your neighbour.<sup>7</sup> But he has a special horror of loud laughter; the wise man will at most be moved to a grave smile.<sup>8</sup>

The sage, you see, is an eminently social being. He moves among men, sedate, deliberate, solid, his health secured by a judicious diet and his face shining with a good conscience. Severe as he is within

son has in his translation substituted for the second of these clauses the more edifying advice: "Bring offerings unto the Lord worthily," and so, of course, our English Bibles."

<sup>1</sup> xviii. 25-27

<sup>2</sup> xiv. 10; xxxi. 22-24; xl. 20.

<sup>3</sup> xl. 20, 21.

<sup>4</sup> xxxii. 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> xxxi. 20.

<sup>6</sup> xxxi. 21.

<sup>7</sup> xxxi. 12-18.

<sup>8</sup> xxi. 20; xxvii. 13.

his house, he is ready to show a sedulous kindness wherever he meets outside it with want or trouble. To the poor man he will always return a courteous answer; the orphan and widow will find him a firm protector.<sup>1</sup> Nobody need fear that ragged clothes will wrinkle his face with any movement of derision.<sup>2</sup> He has indeed had bitter experience of the ingratitude of men, but he will not allow that to check his hand in relieving distress. He will still "help a poor man for the commandment's sake."<sup>3</sup> You must remember that the duty of almsgiving had come to take a peculiarly prominent place in the Jewish code of righteousness, so prominent that the very word for "righteousness" came in later Hebrew to be used in the special sense of almsgiving, just as has happened with our word "charity." Since therefore, as we saw, to keep the commandments is the best insurance for life, the giving of alms is an obvious measure of enlightened self-interest. "Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee repaid a thousandfold will be, then gladly will we lend to Thee" is altogether in the spirit of Ben-Sira—except that he might have thought the "thousandfold" pitching our expectation somewhat too high.

He is a very good friend, and a secret entrusted to him is locked in impenetrable silence. About no offence does he express himself with more abhorrence than that of blabbing secrets.<sup>4</sup> His fidelity will stand all tests, and he is steadfast to his old loves. "New wine," he says, "a new friend; old wine, and thou wilt drink it."<sup>5</sup> "Change not a friend for money, neither a true brother for the

<sup>1</sup> iv. 1-10; x. 22.<sup>2</sup> xi. 4 (Hebrew).<sup>3</sup> xxix. 9.<sup>4</sup> xxvii. 16-21.<sup>5</sup> ix. 10.

gold of Ophir.”<sup>1</sup> “Let thy acquaintance,” he says elsewhere, “be many, and thy bosom-friend one of a thousand.”<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the Hebrew sage is by now present to your apprehension. Of many other types to be found in that Jewish society his book gives us glimpses more or less fugitive. Let me mention the man who tries to get the better of you by assuming an appearance of extreme affliction, “hanging down his head with mourning, bowing down his face, and making as if he were deaf of one ear”;<sup>3</sup> the fool who offers shabby entertainment with great parade and circumstance, “opening his mouth like a crier,” and then complains that men eat his victuals and abuse him behind his back;<sup>4</sup> the stranger who is sponged upon by the residents in a place, and given the cold shoulder when they find it convenient to get rid of him;<sup>5</sup> the merchant or small tradesman, too often almost forced by his business out of the straight line of rectitude;<sup>6</sup> the seafaring men who have come home with wonderful stories of what they have seen on the high seas, of the great marine monsters.<sup>7</sup> In one chapter<sup>8</sup> we have the life of the scribe contrasted with the lower employments; with that of the farm labourer, “who driveth out and bringeth back the oxen with songs, and whose converse can be only with young heifers,” whose “heart is set upon turning his furrows, and who is occupied with fatted calves”;<sup>9</sup> the craftsman, who makes objects of household use or does the fine

<sup>1</sup> vii. 18.      <sup>2</sup> vi. 6. Spoilt in the Greek translation.      <sup>3</sup> xix. 26.

<sup>4</sup> xx. 15-17.

<sup>5</sup> xxix. 24-28.

<sup>6</sup> xxvi. 29.

<sup>7</sup> xliii. 24, 25.

<sup>8</sup> xxxviii. 24-30.

<sup>9</sup> This translation supposes the reading לְעֵגְלוֹת (A. A. Bevan) for the לְכֵלוֹת of the text as printed by Peters.

work of gem-engraving; the worker in metal, with the noise of the hammer ever in his ears and his eyes fixed upon the pattern after which he shapes his vessel; the potter, whose manner of working is described in terms which make us regret that the Hebrew original of this passage is not among the recovered fragments. As among the old Persians, as among the Greeks and Romans of the good old times, agriculture is held in honour.<sup>1</sup> Ben-Sira has an especial regard for the physician, whom he bids us also respect. He defends the practice of medicine against the view, which in those days, as in ours, found supporters, that it implied want of faith in God. He points out that the skill of the physician is itself the use of a God-given faculty of observation and that the properties of herbs also belong to them by the Divine order.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps we have in these references to medicine an isolated trace in Ben-Sira of Greek influence, since the medical science esteemed in the Nearer East had been, even before the Macedonian conquest, the medical science of the Greeks, and we may therefore conjecture that the Jewish physicians practised on Greek lines.

It is now time to shut this curious old book. I do not know what you feel about Jeshua Ben-Sira. Perhaps there is something in his limited sober-going morality which displeases you. It is certainly not profound, and yet he impresses me as a worthy and honourable man. At any rate his atmosphere is clean to breathe. In passing to his environment from the heavy atmosphere of Joseph and Hyrcanus, charged with self-gratulation, flunkeyism and lust, I feel as if one were going into the open air. His

<sup>1</sup> vii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> xxxviii. 1-8.



outlook is wide and human ; he himself, as he tells us, has travelled in foreign lands and observed many kinds of men. There is in his book, one might perhaps say, a breath from the sea. And if there is a want of passion, of conflict, in this type of Judaism, if you must pronounce it too smoothly accommodated to the world, wait a little and you will see a fierce enough trial cause another temper to be manifested in Israel, an anguish going down to the deep places of the soul, and evoking thence, not only a bitter cry, but, with the cry, a vaster, a more radiant hope.

### III

#### JUDAS MACCABÆUS AND HIS BRETHREN

IN our first lecture we followed the history of Palestine to the time when it passed from the house of Ptolemy to the house of Seleucus. Of the history of the Jewish state itself we found little enough to say, but there is one figure belonging to this moment, which claims our attention, the figure of the high-priest Simeon, surnamed the Righteous. And although even of Simeon there is not much of a definite kind recorded, we may believe that there was something in his personality which left a deep mark upon his contemporaries, for while so many who played a leading part in Jewish history between the days of Nehemiah and the Christian era were forgotten, Simeon the Righteous always lived on in the memory of the people. In the later Jewish traditions which we find embodied in the Mishnah and the Talmud, the names of Judas and of his brethren nowhere appear,<sup>1</sup> but of Simeon it is said that in his days the red cord upon the head of the scapegoat turned white, a symbol of the national sins put away, that the lamps in the Temple never went out, and the flame on the altar burnt always clear and strong.<sup>2</sup> He became the typical embodiment of the high-priesthood in pre-Maccabæan days

<sup>1</sup> They are alluded to anonymously as the "sons of Mattathiah" in the *Megillath Taanith* 11 a.

<sup>2</sup> Dérenbourg, *Histoire et geog. de la Palestine*, p. 48.

to the imagination of the later Jews. It is given as his characteristic maxim that the three pillars upon which the world rests are the Law, the holy ritual, and loving-kindness.

But these documents date from a time long after Simeon, and we have more authentic notices of him than those in rabbinic tradition. We can find him portrayed in a contemporary writing, that book of Ben-Sira about which we spoke in our last lecture. If you will turn to the 50th chapter of *Ecclesiasticus*, you will be able to see Simeon as he appeared to the enraptured eyes of his people, when in all his glorious vestments, surrounded by the sons of Aaron, he poured out the drink-offering before the Lord, when he lifted up his hands to bless the congregation of Israel, and the great multitude fell upon their faces all together as one man. Ben-Sira tells us in the same chapter that Simeon, who was, you will remember, not only the religious, but also the political, chief of the community, had carried through important public works at Jerusalem—a large reservoir apparently and a renewal or extension of the fortifications. Both by supernatural means and by natural Israel felt that this great high-priest assured his people's peace.

But the days of prosperity were soon to come to an end. Trouble began within twenty-two years of the time when Antiochus the Great entered Jerusalem as a deliverer. Antiochus was killed, warring in the East, in 187, and was succeeded by his son Seleucus IV. Philopator. The narrative of 2 *Maccabees* begins in the 3rd chapter in the reign of Seleucus. The story of those days preceding the Maccabæan revolt is very doubtful and obscure.

Different scholars have quite different views as to how we are to interpret our scanty and contradictory records. But I think these facts emerge with some sort of distinctness. The influence of Hellenism, the more or less corrupt Hellenism of second-century Syria, had made very conspicuous inroads in the society of Jerusalem, especially in the ranks of the priestly aristocracy. The public offices of the religious Jewish state had become for them objects of worldly intrigue. More and more Jerusalem was abandoning its attitude of exclusiveness and isolation. But at the same time, as would necessarily happen, this tendency in influential quarters provoked a reaction in other circles, which confronted the fashionable Hellenism with a more determined and ardent spirit of piety. Over against the rich men of Jerusalem and their followers, all those who were for the old ways, for the righteousness of the Law, closed their ranks in rigid opposition; there came to be formed a definite body, something between a religious sect and a party in the state, who were known as the *Hasīdīm*. This is the word which our Bibles translate by "godly"; but it is also used of God Himself, and translated by "gracious" or "merciful." It seems really to imply a heart warm and tender, either the heart of God with regard to man, or of man with regard to God, or of man with regard to his fellows, and I think the English word which would best give the colour of *Hasīdīm*, as the name of this set of people, would be "the tender ones," in the old religious sense in which we find the word "tender" used by devout writers of the seventeenth century, for those in whom conscience is sensitive and the spiritual

affections quick and warm. The ranks of the Hasîdîm, we may take it, were recruited mainly from the poorer class, the godly poor that we find so often contrasted in our Bibles with the godless rich, and from the country villages rather than from Jerusalem. But there were also those among the prominent men who threw in their lot with them, and among these the high-priest himself of those days—the son, according to Josephus, of Simeon the Righteous—named Oniah. The party looked up to him as its leader and head.

With this internal division in the Jewish community, troubles arose from two sources. One source was the demand for money which the Seleucid government began to raise. The financial condition of the Seleucid realm, to which the Jews had now become annexed, was far from being as sound as that of the Ptolemaïc; besides this, Antiochus the Great had at the end of his reign waged a most disastrous war with a new power arising in the West, the power of Rome, and in consequence had left his kingdom to Seleucus IV., with empty treasuries and burdened by a heavy war-indemnity. It became an urgent necessity for the government to raise money in every way it could, and the various communities of Syria soon felt the pressure. The other source of trouble for the Jews worked in with the one we have just mentioned; it consisted in the intrigues of some of the rich men to possess themselves of power in Jerusalem. The Seleucid court, in its desperate straits, could be easily moved to action by the gleam of gold in any petitioner's hand. These troubles are reflected by the story told us in 2 *Macc.* iii. A Jewish notable, called



Simon, incites the Seleucid court to seize the sacred moneys in the Temple; and the prime minister Heliodorus accordingly visits Jerusalem in state and enters the Temple, but is there confronted by angels, who scourge him out of it more dead than alive. After this, we are told, the intrigues of Simon with the Seleucid court and the governor of Palestine took so menacing a shape that Oniah believed his only prudent course was to leave Jerusalem and go himself to Antioch to represent matters to the king. This departure of Oniah to Antioch seems a piece of true history.

In 176-5 Seleucus IV. was murdered by the prime minister Heliodorus, and his infant son, it would appear, put upon the throne, though, of course, this would be only a mask for the real reign of Heliodorus himself. But there were other heirs. Seleucus left an elder son Demetrius, whom Heliodorus could not reach, because his father had been obliged to send him to Rome, as a hostage. There was also a brother of Seleucus, who had been a hostage at Rome, till he was replaced by Demetrius, and who at this moment was probably enjoying the literary and academic society of Athens. He was called Antiochus. So that, by murdering the king, Heliodorus had by no means procured himself free scope.

Demetrius was still only a boy and not allowed to move from Italy, but it was not long before Antiochus appeared in Northern Syria with some troops lent him by the king of Pergamos in Asia Minor. There was a moment of confusion throughout the Seleucid realm; every person of influence, every community, had to take sides with one of the

claimants to the throne or to wait events. Antiochus seems to have played his cards well. He knew when to use diplomacy, and when to use force. He emerged victorious from the confusion, and the opposition melted away. We hear no more of Heliodorus. Antiochus sat as acknowledged king upon the throne of his murdered brother.

This is the Antiochus, Antiochus IV., whose name is familiar to you as Antiochus Epiphanes. I shall come to the meaning of that surname presently. First, I must try to tell you what sort of a man he appears from all accounts to have been. It is not easy to do so, for even to his contemporaries he was such a puzzle, that we can hardly expect, looking at him only through some few scraps of written records, to make out his personality with complete clearness. I must describe him to you as I myself see him. To start with, he was a man of a very ardent imagination. Any idea which was clothed in striking form and colour might possess and dominate him. And these sort of ideas were, as we saw in our last lecture, furnished in plenty by Hellenism—Hellenism with the thousand shapes of its consummate art, its civic and religious pageantry, its political ceremonies invested in a halo of great historic associations, the charmed forms of its literature. An apprehension of Hellenism which was imaginative only was of course superficial; but this superficial Hellenism was very rife during all the centuries of decline through which the classical civilisation passed to its doom, and it became the ruling passion of Antiochus. Secondly, the stimulus which was given him by his imagination was very rapidly translated into act, for he was

a man of vehement impulse and high spirits. An idea seized him, and he must realise it, whatever impediments of convention or dignity or conscience stood in the way. This is how he came to scandalise his court by the democratic familiarity of his manners, by his practical jokes, by his love of some theatrical nonsense, as when he made Antioch for a time pretend to be Rome and sat himself in the market-place, dressed as a Roman ædile, to adjudge the small disputes of the day. This too made him, for all his bonhomie, for all his lavish open-handed liberality, fundamentally a tyrant; not, of course, that he had any delight in cruelty, but that whatever stood in the way of his will must be beaten down, and if a vindictive impulse was provoked in him, he put no restraint upon it. His impulses were, as the case might be, generous or grandiose or sensual or frolicsome or resentful, but at any rate he flung himself with a reckless vehemence in the direction they pointed. But with all his waywardness and intemperance, Antiochus had a strong grasp of affairs; when his heart was set upon an object he had a great measure of practical ability; he could see and apply the means. The military enterprises he undertook were uniformly successful. And his impulses, if they could be controlled by nothing else, could be commanded by his policy; or rather the master impulse which constituted his policy could hold minor ones in abeyance. Perhaps his youth as a hostage in Rome had made him an adept in dissimulation. He could nurse a deadly design and yet remit nothing externally of his easy friendliness, his frank, spontaneous manners.

This apparent naturalness and simplicity made the most impenetrable kind of screen. He was a finished diplomat, and when we find him described in *Daniel* as "understanding dark sentences," we must not think of an oracular sage, but of one who could use to perfection the instrument of language, as Talleyrand said that a statesman should use it, in order to conceal thought. Lastly, I think it is not inconsistent with anything we have said of Antiochus to suppose that there was really something not absolutely sound in his mental constitution, such an impalpable vein of insanity as can go with brilliant powers and extraordinary astuteness in dealing. We know that the popular wit changed his surname of Epiphanes into Epimanes "the madman," and his untimely death seems to have been preceded by some sort of pronounced derangement. His hard drinking would, of course, aggravate any latent mental disease.

Such was the master under whom the Jewish state found itself in 175 B.C. Syria soon felt that a man with a progressive program was at the head of affairs. Antiochus saw in his kingdom a field in which to operate as the crowned apostle of Hellenism; or perhaps we should say he saw in Hellenism the medium which could best unify his heterogeneous kingdom. The cities were encouraged to conform more perfectly to the Hellenic pattern, and possibly a larger measure of autonomy was conceded to those which were willing to do so, in accordance with that ground-principle of Hellenism which prescribed that every city-state should be a free and sovereign community. This conversion to the Hellenic type with the accompanying privileges was

not something which the government of Antiochus forced upon unwilling societies, but something conceded as a favour, a grant of liberties, of dignity. A unification of the kingdom on the basis of a common culture and local self-government was in itself a perfectly statesmanlike idea. There was nothing crazy or hare-brained about it. Perhaps you may think that we cannot say so much of one element that we may probably discern in the schemes of Antiochus—the promotion of his own worship as a god by the various cities. Here, you exclaim, we have vanity really running into lunacy! There is certainly something very wrong here, but I think when we make our survey wider, we see that the root of the evil is not in the policy of Antiochus, but in the whole development of the Greek religion in its connection with the Greek state. Antiochus, if he expected to receive divine honours, was not expecting anything unusual according to the notions of the time. Alexander the Great had received divine honours, and so even had some of the prominent men of Greece in the generations before Alexander; all the Ptolemies and all the Seleucids were officially worshipped in their kingdoms; the Roman emperors later on were worshipped, as a regular thing, with temples and priesthoods and sacrifice. You see even in this respect the policy of Antiochus Epiphanes has nothing startling when taken in its historical context. What this worship of great men, and especially of kings, in the Greco-Roman world meant, of what thoughts it was the outcome, is a subject too large to be entered upon now; but I may say so much, that, to understand it, you must not think of what we understand by the name of



*God*, but of the notions which it conveyed to the people of that Greco-Roman world, and that among the educated classes these formalities of worship were interpreted less in a superstitious, than in a rationalistic, sense. But, while this element in the schemes of Antiochus corresponded with current ideas, a sober-minded statesman would have cared little for the formalities in themselves; his official divinity, even if it did not offend his religious sense, would jar upon his understanding; with Antiochus, I think, it was just the other way. It is a bad sign, that in the policy of Antiochus just this element is prominent—an element which appealed to his theatrical imagination—that now for the first time in the Seleucid realm the coins display, beside the name of the king, high-sounding surnames, *Epiphanes*, that is, as it sometimes appears in full, *Theos Epiphanes*, the “god made manifest”; *Nikephoros*, “the holder of victory,” a surname connected by Greek usage with the supreme god, Zeus.

The accession of such a king made a great difference at Jerusalem. The prospects of the Hellenising party opened to an unexpected extent; they would now find ready enough hearing at Antioch. Oniah the high-priest was an obstacle, but the Hellenists had a champion in his brother Jeshua, or, by his Greek name, Jason. It was common from this time for a Jew to have a Greek name beside his Hebrew name, often chosen for its resemblance in sound: a Jeshua would take the name of Jason, an Eliakim the name of Alcimus, and so on. Jason, by the usual sort of money-transaction at court, got himself recognised as high-priest by the king’s government in the place of his brother, and he obtained

leave to remodel Jerusalem, as a new Antioch, on Hellenic lines. The dispossessed Oniah seems to have gone on living in exile at Antioch; the flock of the Hasîdîm were without their shepherd; and Jason and the Hellenists had it all their own way. The indispensable gymnasium rose in the heart of the city; the younger members of the Jewish aristocracy eagerly formed a body of *epheboi*, and flaunted about the streets in the ephebic garb, which corresponded, as we saw, to the Greek country dress—chlamys and broad-brimmed hat. By the act of its own people, Jerusalem had renounced its age-long isolation and come into line with the great Hellenic world.

You can imagine the grief and horror, the consuming indignation, with which members of the Hasîdîm watched those young men stroll by. I think we must allow that, if we had sought for real piety and high earnestness, we should have found it in the meetings of the Hasîdîm rather than in the gymnasium. At the same time, it would, I think, be a mistake to suppose that the opposition of the Hasîdîm to Hellenism was simply the opposition of godliness to impiety. It was, we cannot doubt, in large part the intolerant conservatism with which a primitive people resists any foreign innovation, good or bad, simply because it is an innovation and foreign; if we cross-examine our documents as to what exactly it was so dreadful that Jason and his friends did, we are told that they wore Greek hats and were possessed with an enthusiasm for athletic exercises. Well, the Hasîdîm were not twentieth-century Christians; they were men of their day with its limitations and narrow thoughts; but it was they who

kept, in whatever shell of old-world prejudice, that spiritual treasure, so unspeakably precious to the whole human race, committed to Israel.

It is a curious speculation what would have happened, if the party then in power in Jerusalem had governed soberly and well, and while admitting so much as they did of Hellenism, had continued to keep clear of transgressions against all that part of Judaism which was really fundamental and valid. It could not be. The party in power lacked the moral basis essential to orderly government. It consisted too much of worldly men, pursuing each one his selfish ambitions. As Jason had intrigued against Oniah, so another magnate, whom we only know by his Greek name of Menelaus, was soon intriguing against Jason. The court was moved to ordain that Menelaus should be high-priest, and Jason fled into the country east of Jordan. Menelaus was not even deterred by a perception of his own interests from riding rough-shod over the sensibilities of the Jewish people; he made free with the holy vessels of the Temple; and the pious Jews were horrified to learn one day that their old leader Oniah had been murdered by his machinations at Antioch. The consequence was that Menelaus and the Seleucid government which supported him became abhorred: Jerusalem seethed with discontent; everything was ready for an outbreak.

The occasion came in connection with the war which broke out in 170 or 169 between Antiochus and Egypt. There was again a minority in the Ptolemaïc kingdom, and the war was begun by the incompetent regents who ruled on behalf of the lad Ptolemy Philometor. No doubt, the Jews now looked

back with regret to the days of Ptolemaïc rule and were heartily on the side of Egypt. But they did not at first dare to rise in open rebellion. At last, while Antiochus was campaigning in Egypt, a report spread through Palestine that he was dead. Jason, who had contrived to get together a band of desperadoes, saw his opportunity. He flew back to Jerusalem, drove Menelaus into the citadel and put numbers of his supporters—of the party, that is, loyal to the Seleucid government—to the sword. But Antiochus was not dead, and this outbreak at Jerusalem, this rebellion during the process of a foreign war, seemed to call for signal chastisement. On his way back from Egypt he turned aside to beat down Jerusalem beneath the feet of the high-priest, and let loose his soldiers to massacre. But that was not all. It was an unwise practice of Antiochus to relieve his financial necessities by appropriating the treasures of the Syrian temples. The Temple at Jerusalem was said to contain great riches, and Jerusalem had made itself liable to punishment. Antiochus determined to enter the Temple and carry off whatever pleased his fancy. It is difficult for us to realise the horror which such a profanation would send through the Jewish people, the appalling insistence with which the question would rack them, Why, why the Lord did not defend His own sanctuary? “Wherefore do the heathen say, Where is now thy God?” There were no angels who confronted Antiochus when he went into the Holy Place and took “the golden altar and the candlestick of the light, the table of the shewbread, and the cups to pour withal, and the bowls, and the golden censers, and the Veil, and the crowns, and

scaled off the adorning of gold which was on the face of the Temple."<sup>1</sup> It was the sense of abandonment by its God, which made the bitterness of the anguish to the heart of Israel.

But these things were the beginning of pangs. The worst was not yet. Antiochus had set an evil man over the nation; he had made Jerusalem bleed for the sins of its rulers; he had violated and robbed the Temple; but these were blows which Israel, shrunk into its inner stronghold of patient continuance in the Law, might outlive. It was this stronghold itself which Antiochus in course of time assailed. He came to the conclusion that it was possible, that it was expedient, to extinguish the eccentric Jewish religion once for all. As far as Jerusalem itself went, the execution of his plans was fairly simple. Already a part of the population, and especially, as we saw, of the ruling class, had adopted Hellenism; the political organisation of the state after the pattern of a Greek republic was carried through by a royal commissioner; and Jehovah having been identified with the Olympian Zeus, the Temple service was recast in Greek forms, with an image of the god, which probably displayed the features of Antiochus himself. A garrison of the king's troops occupied the citadel; and under their eye Jerusalem held its new political assemblies, and sacrificed animals forbidden by Moses to its transfigured divinity. No doubt, a large number of those who took part in these things, did so with a heavy heart; the triumph of Hellenism was not as complete as outward appearances proclaimed. But there were many whom no stress could bring

<sup>1</sup> I Macc. i. 21, 22.



to conform, and these forsook the city and thronged into the country towns and villages. Here they were followed up by the agents of the government, which was resolved to stamp out Jewish practices throughout the land. If only these practices could be once interrupted, if circumcision were once stopped and the rules of food broken through, the thing would be done. And surely practices so irrational and uncouth, as they seemed to the Greeks, would soon give way, if torture and death were applied firmly to break them down.

How familiar it all sounds to us, who look back along such a dreadful vista of religious persecutions! But it was a new thing then. Israel had never gone through such a crisis before. And when we reckon up our debt to Israel, we must remember that it is this crisis which opens the roll of *martyrs*. There were many in that day of agony who endured everything, the several forms of torture and death, rather than disobey the Law of their God. You may read the typical cases, as they were remembered in subsequent generations, in the 6th and 7th chapters of 2 *Maccabees*, the story of the old scribe Eleazar, of the Seven Brethren. The stories had already clothed themselves for the writer in a halo of legend, and he tricks them out in that poor rhetoric, that stilted literary jargon, which was the curse of third-rate authors in the Hellenistic world; but if you can penetrate through this repellent medium, you can still touch an anguish that was once real and quivering, an endurance and faith that was once the supreme effort of a human soul.

In a way the Jewish martyrs of this time were more sorely tried than their Christian successors.

The Christians were prepared for persecution ; in connection with the whole scheme of things, with the certain future blessedness, it was at worst only a transitory moment of pain. But the Jewish martyrs were the pioneers on this road ; to them this affliction was an appalling surprise ; death, remember, had not been to their thinking the gate into life, but a darkness which God, in the case of His faithful servants, held back till they had enjoyed their full measure of days. And now—? How did the old easy comfortable doctrine of the happy end of the righteous sound to those carried to the tormentors ? Nor did the problem touch the individual only. What did it mean that God had delivered up His people to the enemy ? The daily sacrifice on the altar at Jerusalem, the pledge and the means of communication between the Lord and Israel, had ceased ; it was an open breaking off of relations. To the faithful it must have seemed that the ground was gone from under their feet and that before their eyes was only a void of darkness. And then it was they discovered that, instead of the ground, God had given their feet wings ; and their eyes, straining against the dark, were suddenly filled with the vision of the New Jerusalem, bright beyond the brightness of the sun.

We may read the Divine word which when the gloom was deepest brought comfort and hope to the saints—the book of *Daniel*. The books of the *Maccabees* give us something of the external history ; this book takes us to the very heart of these days. Perhaps I must digress to say a word or two for those who have not followed the question as to the historical context of *Daniel*. It used to

be very generally thought among Christian people that we could not suppose the book of *Daniel* to be a product of the Maccabæan age, without disbelief in God. Of course, if we were sure we had the testimony of God to anything, that would be final. But where there is strong evidence in one direction, we must make very sure that what is alleged to be the testimony of God to the contrary really is the testimony of God. Well, there is very strong evidence, which I cannot go into now, that the book of *Daniel* is a product of the time we are dealing with, and I think nearly all those capable of appreciating that evidence, who have thought over the whole question, as Christians, have come to the conclusion that there is no religious ground in this matter for rejecting the evidence which appeals to them, as scholars. I should shrink, when speaking in connection with a society of this kind, from putting forward views which general opinion in the Church would regard as heretical, even if they recommended themselves to me personally; but when I look round to discover what the views on this subject held to-day by those men who shape opinion in the Church of England actually are, it seems to me that the view I have stated has found general acceptance. It is certainly taught to the coming generation of our clergy from the theological chairs of Oxford and Cambridge; it is the view I find taken even in the ordinary books put into the hands of boys, like the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. If this view may not be taken as accepted, I hardly know what "acceptance" means; assuming it therefore as granted, I turn to point out

how the book of *Daniel* came with just the message which those bewildered hearts required.

Its earlier chapters consist of a series of stories which showed them faithful Israelites in just such a predicament as theirs, refusing all inducements to eat forbidden food, thrown into the furnace or the den of lions because they will not bow down to the image which the king has set up, or forsake the service of their God; they showed human power and pride, resembling that of the Seleucid king, humbled in a moment by madness; they showed the great Gentile kingdoms, like this Greek supremacy which seemed so overwhelming and terrible, as but phases in a world-process whose end is the kingdom of God. Then we pass to apocalyptic visions. In the 7th chapter the four powers which have had lordship over Israel, the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, and the Greek, are figured as four beasts, of which the last is far the most powerful, and Antiochus appears as a little horn which springs out of the head of the fourth beast, "with a mouth speaking great things." In the eighth chapter the Greek power is a he-goat of which Alexander is the original great horn. But the great horn is replaced by four horns and out of one of them, the Seleucid dynasty, again comes forth the little horn Antiochus, who waxes great even to the host of heaven and causes the continual offering of the Temple to cease. At the end of the 9th chapter the present tribulation is described in the form of a communication made by the angel Gabriel to Daniel. Unfortunately the passage has become so much mutilated in the course of being copied,

that the interpretation of many phrases is impossible to fix with certainty; but it seems to contain a reference to the murder of Oniah, "an anointed one shall be cut off," and to the erection of the heathen altar in the Temple, where the Hebrew expression for the altar has been rendered in English, following the Septuagint, "the abomination of desolation." Lastly the vision which goes from the beginning of the 11th chapter to xii. 4, first traces the whole course of history, so far as it had affected Palestine, from the conquest of Alexander to the actual moment and then passes immediately, after the manner of prophecy, to describe the final consummation of Divine judgment and the reward of the righteous. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."<sup>1</sup> It was a great moment in the history of religion when these words obtained a place in the consciousness of Israel. Through the grim conflict with torture and death the elect people was being led to new vision: the Spirit which had guided and taught them in the past did not fail them now; the thought of their teachers still reacted under His inspiration to the need of the day. The martyr could now go down to the gulf of darkness with a transcendent prospect upon the farther side.

In its first stage the resistance of the faithful

<sup>1</sup> Dan. xii. 2, 3.



Jews to persecution was passive. They were led as sheep to the slaughter, or they fled into the wilderness. It was the wilderness, humanly speaking, which saved them; if there are tracts of wild country, mountain or steppe, close at hand, it is almost impossible for any government to exterminate a people. The king's forces made efforts to track the fugitives down, and at first they had some success. They set upon one band on the Sabbath day; "and they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped up the secret places, saying, Let us die all in our simplicity."<sup>1</sup> Then a new spirit took possession of the hunted people: they suddenly turned at bay fiercely and resentfully. This change was due to the influence of a family of five brothers, members of the priestly class, of the house of Hashmon. They called on the people to fight, even on the Sabbath day. Would the Hasîdîm consider such a call the voice of God? For better or worse, the Hasîdîm answered yes, and took their stand with the sons of Hashmon. It was now war to the knife.

Of the five sons of Hashmon the most commanding personality belonged to Judas, surnamed Maccabæus. He was captain of the guerilla bands. From their holds in the wilderness they raided the Judæan villages, massacred those of their fellow-countrymen who had conformed to the king's decrees and circumcised the children by force. We are now at the beginning of the Maccabæan revolt and must take care to distinguish its successive phases. The present phase is that of the collisions between the bands of Judas and the provincial forces. It is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Macc. ii. 36.

reflected in the fights with Apollonius and Seron described in 1 *Macc.* iii. 10-26; and in the repulse of the army sent by Ptolemy, the governor of Cœle-Syria, under Nicanor and Gorgias.<sup>1</sup> The provincial forces sustained severe reverses, and it soon became apparent that the revolt was far more than they could cope with. Judas, although he was not in a position to assail Jerusalem, made himself master of the Judæan countryside. The headquarters of the insurgents were at Mizpah. It was time for the court of Antioch to take the matter in hand.

When the court of Antioch took action, Antiochus was no longer there. In the summer of 166 or 165 he began a series of campaigns for the recovery of Armenia and the Eastern provinces. Syria was governed during his absence by the regent Lysias. The regent advanced against the Jews in 165-4. The expedition of Nicanor and Gorgias had been frustrated by the difficulty of penetrating through the hill-passes which defend Judæa on the side of the Philistine plain; Lysias moved round to the south, where the ascent from Idumæa was open and easy, and attacked the southern outpost of the insurgents at Beth-sur. The first book of *Maccabees* relates that he was routed by Judas with a loss of 5000 men. This however appears to be a patriotic untruth. We see from the other book of *Maccabees* that the Jews were really confronted with a greatly superior power. Nevertheless Lysias did not push home his attack. The Jews were saved, not by their own strength, but by a sudden change in the general

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Macc.* iii. 38-iv. 24; 2 *Macc.* viii. 8-29.

situation. The news reached Syria that Antiochus Epiphanes had died, it would seem of some sort of cerebral trouble, far away in Persia. This made it urgent for Lysias to hurry back to Antioch. He made terms with the Jewish insurgents. By these he agreed to remove the ban from the Jewish religion, to allow the adherents of the Law to return to Jerusalem, and the old worship of Jehovah to be restored. But he probably stipulated that the Hellenising party were on their side to be unmolested.

Perhaps you may have seen last December a notice in the papers of a service held in one of the London synagogues on the occasion of a festival called Hanukkath-habbaith. Various prominent members of the Jewish community, including officers in King Edward's Guards, were mentioned as attending it. I dare say, if you saw the notice, it did not convey much to you. Well, it was just a sign how those old days of Judas Maccabæus and King Antiochus are still linked in odd ways to our own. The event commemorated in that festival was nothing else but the re-consecration of the Temple, when the regent Lysias allowed Judas and the faithful Jews to return to Jerusalem—the "Dedication of the House" in a December two thousand five hundred and eight years ago. The old altar of burnt offering, over which the heathen altar had been built, could not be used again. Its stones were put away in a place on the Temple hill, "until there should come a prophet to give an answer concerning them." A new altar was made, and on the 25th of Chislev—the very day, it is said, when the

profanation had taken place three or four years before—the smoke of the first sacrifice went up from it to the Lord.

Notice that we have now reached the term of the first struggle between the sons of Hashmon and the Seleucid government. Hitherto it was right to speak of Judas and his bands as fighting for religious liberty. henceforth they are fighting for religious liberty no more. Religious liberty they have got; but they are far from satisfied with being tolerated, if the Hellenists are tolerated too. Their warfare has hitherto been in principle defensive; now it becomes aggressive.

Lysias went back to Antioch, where the young son of Antiochus Epiphanes, a boy of nine years, Antiochus Eupator, had been proclaimed king. Lysias continued to be regent. The sons of Hashmon, or, as we will call them by the Grecised form of their name, the *Hasmonæan* brethren, who were now the acknowledged leaders of the bulk of the Palestinian Jews, used their power for striking strong blows. In many of the Gentile towns of Syria, in Galilee, in Idumæa, across the Jordan, there were little communities of resident Jews. The Gentile peoples were on the side of the government against the Jews, so that when the insurgents in Judæa were successful, they vented their anger by harassing the Jewish colonies in their midst. In one place, at any rate, it is said that an actual massacre took place.

These things brought the new rulers of Judæa upon the scene. The vengeance of Judas, if not unprovoked, was marked by appalling barbarity. At Bosra and Maspha it is stated that he put all the

males to the sword. The Jewish writers gloat over these atrocities. "Having taken the city by the will of God," we read in 2 *Macc.* xii. 16, "they made unspeakable slaughter, insomuch that the adjoining lake, which was two furlongs broad, appeared to be filled with the deluge of blood." The little dispersed colonies of Jews were brought back to Judæa. These were not wars of conquest, of expansion, but wars whose purpose was the *concentration* of Palestinian Judaism. You can imagine that the Hellenists at Jerusalem did not find their situation a happy one. Some were killed; some took refuge in the citadel, which a royal garrison still held; some fled into Idumæa. They sent a bitter cry to Antioch; was the government going to abandon its adherents to the vengeance of its enemies. In 163 Lysias came down upon Judæa with the most imposing army that had yet been moved against the Jews. It was accompanied even by the boy-king. The Jews saw a sight quite new to them, the strange Indian elephants coming to battle. This time also Lysias approached Jerusalem from the south. Judas tried to arrest the advance at Beth-Zachariah, but he was defeated and thrown back to the country north of Jerusalem. One of the Hasmonæan brethren, Eleazar, fell on the field.

But once more the Jews were saved by outside events. A certain Philip, a friend of the late king's, set himself up at Antioch in opposition to Lysias. It was necessary for Lysias to make the best use he could of his superior strength in coming to terms with the Jews, and then return north. What the pact came to exactly was we cannot say. The



Hasmonæan brethren seem to have been recognised as the rulers of the Jewish community, and on their part to have acknowledged allegiance to the king. Menelaus, the old instrument of the Seleucid government, was put to death by Lysias—one does not quite understand why. Obviously the treaty was one much more favourable to the Hasmonæan brethren than their reverses would have warranted their hoping. But Lysias dismantled the fortifications of Jerusalem and left the royal garrison in the citadel. It was an uneasy situation with no promise of stability.

Lysias got the better of Philip and continued to hold the regency. But he did not trouble Judas any more. This was not from prudent moderation, but because his whole administration was one of corruption and *laissez-faire*. At last his subservience to Rome had made him so unpopular in the Greek cities of Syria that the country was in a ferment of unrest. You will remember that there was some one who had a better title to the throne than Antiochus Epiphanes and his children—Demetrius, the son of Antiochus' murdered brother Seleucus Philopator, who was a hostage in Rome. All this while he had been growing to manhood. In 162 he escaped from Rome and landed on the Syrian coast. Instantly the country rose for him. The children of Antiochus Epiphanes, by what was considered then a necessity of state, were put to death, as well as Lysias the Regent. The Jews soon felt that another hand held the reins. Demetrius was a strong and energetic ruler, and the opponents of the Hasmonæan cause made a fresh appeal to Antioch. A person now enters whom

we have not seen before, a man of the priestly class called by his Hebrew name Jakim, and by his Greek Alcimus. He appears at Antioch as an opponent of the Hasmonæans and urges his own claim to be installed as high-priest. It would seem that the old line of high-priests, which had gone on unbroken since the days of Cyrus, had now come to an end, except for a younger Oniah, who had fled to Egypt and there got himself the position of high-priest in a new temple built to the Lord at Leontopolis. There was thus a vacancy which had been filled up in these last few years we know not how. Demetrius sent one of his generals called Bacchides, with a force, to instal Alcimus at Jerusalem. And now we discover a strangely significant fact; Judas and his brethren no longer commanded that support of the Hasîdîm, the party of earnest godliness, which had been assured to them, so long as the fight had been for religious liberty. The Hasîdîm were ready to receive Alcimus. Perhaps the rift between the Hasîdîm and the Hasmonæans would already have led to actual antagonism, if Alcimus had behaved with discretion. But he forfeited the alliance of the Hasîdîm by carrying on the partisan vendetta at Jerusalem and shedding more blood.

Bacchides expelled the leaders of the Hasmonæan party from Jerusalem. But Judas and his brethren had still power enough to disturb the peace of the land, so that Demetrius within a few months of the first expedition under Bacchides sent another under Nicanor. If we can rely at all on the lesser touches given by our Jewish historians, Nicanor was a bluff, outspoken, simple-hearted man. He

began by inviting Judas to a personal interview ; and the result was that the Jewish patriot and the Macedonian captain became friends. Nicanor seems to have come to believe that, if they were not worried, the Hasmonæan brethren would follow his advice to settle down in quiet domestic life, and all would go happily. He dismissed the levies from the neighbouring regions which he had with him. Judas showed himself openly in Jerusalem by Nicanor's side, and we are told that he really did take a wife, as Nicanor suggested, and begin family life. But Nicanor's policy was not endorsed at court. An order came that he was to apprehend Judas and send him a prisoner to Antioch. This was hard on Nicanor, but he was a soldier and knew his duty. He was however too transparent for Judas not to divine at once by his manner what had happened. Judas instantly vanished, and Nicanor was in a very ugly position. Somehow or other he must lay hold of Judas, and in his perplexity he betook himself to the Temple. He had a feeling that all these Jews were really in league, and he thought that by bringing pressure to bear on a point where he knew the nation was sensitive he could compel them to deliver Judas into his hands. He marched into the Temple court, where the priests were officiating, and required them to put him in possession of Judas. Naturally he was only answered by blank looks and protestations of ignorance. Then Nicanor pointed at the Temple. He told them he would not be trifled with ; either Judas was given up, or that building was made into a Temple of Dionysus. It was a scene the Jews remembered for generations—Nicanor stand-

ing in the Temple court, his arm stretched out against the House of the Lord and his mouth speaking great things.

Judas meanwhile had collected his bands in the country, and Nicanor, denuded as he was of troops, had to go out and engage him. The result was that battle of Adasa on the 13th of Adar (March) 161, when Judas won his last and greatest victory. Nicanor was found dead on the field. His head and the arm he had stretched out were cut off and nailed up opposite the Temple against which he had blasphemed. But the battle of Adasa, with Demetrius on the throne, availed little. About a month later, it would seem,<sup>1</sup> Bacchides was at Jerusalem again with a serious force. He took the field against Judas, and compelled him to the alternative of a battle under unequal conditions or flight. Judas proudly chose the former, and at the end of the day lay dead upon the field of Eleasa. For the time, the Hasmonæan cause collapsed.

Bacchides cleared Judæa of rebels, organised the country in the interest of the party of Alcimus and the Seleucid government, and secured its approaches on all sides by a ring of military posts. As for the remaining sons of Hashmon, Jonathan, Simon and John, and those who claved to them, the wilderness once more offered them a refuge. It was seen that when the Seleucid power was wielded by a firm hand, it could make its authority effective in Judæa. The land was quiet under its system of garrisons. Alcimus did not enjoy his high-priesthood long. He died, just before Bacchides left

<sup>1</sup> The date is not quite certain ; some authorities think the interval was a year and a month.

Judæa, of a paralytic stroke. His countrymen saw in this a judgment upon him, for attempting some alterations in the Temple, which involved a disturbance of the wall separating the inner court from the common ground outside.

What estimate is history to make of Judas Maccabæus? Is he among the heroes or not? Personally, I do not think that the character of our sources is such that history can say very much about him as a man. The only thing we can affirm with certainty is that he was an able and successful leader of irregular bands. That in itself implies a certain force of personality and a ready courage, but if these things alone are enough to constitute a hero in the high sense, we must make our list of heroes a very large one and include some strange figures. If we ask what his animating motives were, how far devotion to an ideal morally great, how far the ambition to use forces of national and religious enthusiasm for the aggrandisement of his house, I think the truth is that we really do not know. There is nothing, as far as I am aware, which would prove him to have been other than a man of spiritual greatness, if the savagery of his reprisals be once discounted in reference to his environment and time. But there are signs I do not like. I think it is ominous that the adherence of the Hasîdîm wavered in the latter part of his career. And it may be unfairly, but I think this first representative of the Hasmonæan house suffers in the light reflected upon him from the later history of the house. As early at any rate as the time of his brother Jonathan, his next successor, the policy of the house was thoroughly worldly,



and before long it had the more religious part of the nation set against it in open antagonism. Was Judas of quite another spirit? He may have been. But was he?

We can see that if, under the persecutions of the Roman Empire, the early Christians had flown to arms, they might have won notable victories, but it would have been at how great spiritual cost! And it appears to me a question whether it was not at great spiritual cost that the Jewish people allowed itself to be launched by the sons of Hashmon upon a career of carnal strife. For the Jewish community could not be amenable to the same laws as ordinary nations; it was, as we said, more like a church; and the laws of a church's life were in that degree the true laws of its being. No Englishman can question the general right of a people to fight for its religion, for its independence; but just, as according to the Mosaic law, Levi had to renounce many of the things possessed by his brethren because of his pre-eminent and sacred vocation, so perhaps the peculiar vocation of the Jewish community entailed inevitably the deprivation of certain rights belonging to men whose kingdoms are only kingdoms of this world. The absence of political interests which followed the loss of independence had given a larger place in the life of Israel to the sacred Law; the anguish of persecution had driven thought and aspiration towards another world than this; but development on these lines was impeded and confused by the clash of arms and terrestrial ambitions. And when we judge this struggle by its fruits, the same doubts are suggested. The war of the Greeks with the

Persians, the wars of independence in modern Europe, resulted in the enriching and ennobling of national life ; but what was the issue of the battling of Judas and his brethren ? The establishment of a dynasty by whose dominion the national life was poisoned and whose presence at the altar the religious denounced as a pollution. Perhaps this explains why the general conscience of Judaism so soon allowed the memory of Judas and his brethren to fade, why it ultimately abstained from putting any book of *Maccabees* in its sacred canon. The Israelite has a history which at too many points rises to catch the radiance of heaven for him to make much account of such titles to fame as he would after all have in common with the Mahdists of the Sudan.

## IV

### THE HASMONÆAN ASCENDANCY

WE have seen how the trial of strength between the Jewish insurgents and the Seleucid government ended, when an active king was on the throne, in the death of Judas, the scattering of his adherents in the wilderness, and the reduction of Judæa under a strong military occupation. We have now to trace the stages by which from this apparent destruction the Hasmonæan house climbed once more to power, and to a power far higher than any which had been within reach in the days of Judas Maccabæus. But the conditions of their rise were in this epoch quite different from before. When Judas led them, they confronted a single central government, and won what they won by the sword from the royal forces. But from now the Seleucid house was with rare intervals represented by rival claimants, and the gains of the Jews were concessions from one or other of the kings, whose quarrels the astute Hasmonæan politicians knew how to turn to their own advantage.

At the death of Judas, three of the original Five Brethren were left—Jonathan, Simon, and John; and John soon after came to his end in the obscure warfare which went on in the wilderness between the Hasmonæan bands and other marauders. The first step in their recovery was their being allowed to return to Judæa. This took place in 158, while

Demetrius was still on the throne. We do not know enough of the circumstances of the time to explain how the government of Demetrius consented to such a weakening of its position. Jerusalem itself continued in the possession of the friends of the government, and the garrisons continued to hold the chain of forts, but Jonathan was allowed to establish his headquarters at Michmas and become the real ruler of the Judæan countryside. Then came the first split in the Seleucid kingdom which gave the Jews their opportunity. About 152 a young man who professed to be the son of Antiochus Epiphanes and called himself Alexander set up as a rival king on the coast of Palestine at Ptolemaïs. He was almost certainly an impostor and was otherwise known by the Syrian name of Balas. But he was supported by the other kings of the East, by the king of Pergamos, the king of Cappadocia, and Ptolemy Philometor.

The effect was conspicuous in Judæa. In the first place, Demetrius for the greater conflict was obliged to draw in his forces, and many of the forts which coerced Judæa were evacuated. From others the garrisons fled. Demetrius could no longer hold Judæa against the Hasmonæans, already grown a power in the land. His only chance was to enlist them upon his side. He therefore allowed them to make the next step in their upward progress. He allowed them to re-enter Jerusalem, and he authorised Jonathan to maintain a military force. Only the citadel—the *akra*, as it was called in Greek—still remained in possession of the royal garrison. Jonathan used these concessions to the full. He set about repairing the fortifications of the city.

Alexander  
Balas

He erected a fort for his own men to contain and neutralise the *akra*.

But Jonathan's position as chief of the Jewish state was not assured, unless he held that office with which for the last 300 years the presidency of the state had been connected. The Hasmonæan family had resolved to possess itself of the high-priesthood. This next step upward rapidly followed on the last. Alexander Balas, reigning in Ptolemaïs, was ready to outbid Demetrius by creating Jonathan high-priest. He further admitted him to one of those orders which, something like our orders of the Garter and the Bath, made up part of the system of a Hellenistic court, and sent him the purple robe and wreath of gold which distinguished its members. At the Feast of Tabernacles in October 152<sup>1</sup> Jonathan the Hasmonæan first appeared before his people in the sacred vestments of the high-priest—high-priest “by the grace of Balas,” as the German writer Wellhausen calls him, of Balas, perhaps the one altogether contemptible person of those who occupied the Seleucid throne.

Two years later (150) Alexander Balas with the support of the kings of Pergamos and Egypt finally defeated and killed the lawful king Demetrius. Under his reign the relations between Jonathan and the court continued smooth. When Alexander married the daughter of King Ptolemy at Ptolemaïs, Jonathan, our Jewish account says, was among the most honoured guests. The defeated party among the Jews, those who had held by the Seleucid government in former days against the house of Hashmon, made a last desperate attempt to win

<sup>1</sup> According to another view 153.



over the new king. But Alexander would not listen to them and raised Jonathan to a higher order, that of the "First Friends," as it was called. Besides the authority which he possessed as high-priest, Jonathan was now given office under the Seleucid government, the office of governor of Judæa in the king's name. There still remained one conspicuous relic of the old state of things, one galling reminder of the Gentile supremacy—the garrison in the *akra*; Jonathan had still to pay tribute in various forms to the king; but for the time, the Hasmonæan house had good reason to rest satisfied with what it had attained. Balas gave Jonathan a practically free hand in Judæa, and thereby removed the causes of friction; it was also to his interest to have Judæa held by a loyal supporter, while dangers loomed upon him from outside.

There was almost always, in these days, as I said, the rival candidate somewhere. Now it was a younger Demetrius, the son of the Demetrius whom Alexander Balas had overthrown. His father had sent him and his younger brother Antiochus, of whom we shall hear more presently, into Asia Minor before he fell. In 148–147 Demetrius II. set foot in "the land of his fathers." He was a mere lad, at most fourteen, and the real directors of the invasion were certain Cretan adventurers, the captains of the mercenary forces which brought him. The presence of the rightful king at once set his partisans and those of Balas fighting throughout Syria. Apollonius, the governor of Cœle-Syria, that is, Palestine, declared for Demetrius, and so did the Philistine cities. Jonathan, acting as an adherent of Balas,

took the field against them. There was a battle near Azotus (Ashdod), in which the Jews were completely victorious. The defeated army fled into Azotus and crowded for protection into the temple of Dagon. But Jonathan entered after them and burnt the temple over the heads of the living mass. Soon the smoke was going up, not from Azotus only, but from the neighbouring villages of the plain. Only Ascalon saved itself by timely subservience. Of course, Jonathan's stroke was an important service to the cause of Balas. He was rewarded by being promoted to the highest order of all, that of the Kinsmen, and the town of Ekron was assigned as a private possession to him and his heirs for ever.

But a local success did not save the cause of Alexander Balas. Ptolemy Philometor struck in with a superior force. At first, he made as if he would support Balas, who had all through been to some extent his creature. Then he changed about and put Demetrius upon the throne. In 145 Alexander Balas made an attempt to recover the kingdom, but he was routed near Antioch and murdered by his own escort as he fled eastwards. Ptolemy however was himself so badly wounded in the battle that he died a few days afterwards. This left the Cretans, whose tool Demetrius was, in possession of Syria.

During these troubled times, Jonathan thought it a good opportunity to try to drive the garrison out of the *akra*. Of course, as soon as Demetrius II. was acknowledged as king, there was a prospect of Jonathan's being called to account. But he understood how to make it worth the new government's

while to let him alone. His diplomacy even succeeded in bringing him a step nearer to the position of an independent prince, which was the next mark which the Hasmonæan house had in view. For the sake of a lump sum paid down of 300 talents the government of Demetrius II. consented to forego all future claims for tribute. Demetrius also enlarged the Judæan territory on the north by transferring to it some of the district of Samaria. Jonathan was admitted to an honorary order in the new court—not indeed that of Kinsman to which Balas had ultimately raised him, but to that of the First Friends. Perhaps, on his part he agreed to leave the garrison alone.

It was not long before the misgovernment and oppression of the Cretan adventurers drove the cities of Syria to revolt. At Antioch the crowd attacked the palace, and the king's men set the city on fire. The crowd were panic-stricken and every one tried to regain his home and save his family and goods before the fire reached them. The narrow streets were jammed with a mass of struggling terrified people. This gave the king's men their chance; they leapt along from roof to roof and shot down into the thick of the crowd below. One is sorry to know that among those who at that awful moment were the instruments of tyranny was the Jewish contingent sent by Jonathan to the king. The author of 1 *Maccabees* deliberately tries to make us believe that they massacred 100,000 persons in Antioch, and returned laden with plunder. What glory could the Jews claim for their own struggle for independence under Judas and his brethren, when they were so ready to sell themselves to the oppressors of another

people and crush those who were rising against intolerable wrong? No, I think it is to another scene that we must look, if we would see the qualities of the Jews shine forth in their true glory—to the day before the nation was infuriated by the call of the sons of Hashmon—to that scene in the wilderness when a little band of the faithful suffered themselves to be slaughtered without striking a blow that they might not transgress the law of their God, but might die in their simplicity.

The inevitable rival claimant soon appeared. Within a few months of the battle which made Demetrius II. sole king, an infant son of Alexander Balas, known as Antiochus Dionysus, had been proclaimed in Apamea, one of the great towns of Syria to the south of Antioch (still in 145). The leader of this faction was a general of high standing called Tryphon. The Jews soon joined the son of their old friend Alexander Balas. They complained that although they had helped Demetrius to massacre the Antiochenes he had not removed the garrison from the *akra*. Tryphon, of course, welcomed their adherence, and Jonathan was made one of the Kinsmen of the young Antiochus as he had been of the father. Simon was given the post of governor of Palestine. In virtue of these dispositions, the two Hasmonæan brothers now had under their command not only their national levies, but the forces of the Palestinian province. They engaged in a series of military operations, not any longer as chiefs fighting on their own account, but as the officers of King Antiochus, waging war against the party of Demetrius. Gaza held by Demetrius; Jonathan besieged and took it. His operations extended as far as

Damascus. We hear in 1 *Macc.* xi. and xii. of collisions between Jonathan and the generals of Demetrius in Galilee.

But, of course, all the time the Hasmonæan brothers were using their power as the generals of Antiochus to advance the interests of the Jewish state. It was natural that in the course of warfare they should, as generals of Antiochus, put garrisons in places which had been won from Demetrius or were in danger of being captured by his partisans. As chiefs of the Jews, they took care, wherever it was convenient, that these garrisons should be Jewish ones. In this way Beth-sur, Adida and Joppa became practically Jewish strongholds. Jonathan also engaged, as if an independent prince, in negotiations with the great rising power of the West, Rome.<sup>1</sup> Tryphon knew quite well that Jonathan was playing a double game. He thought that he had derived all the good that was possible from his use as an instrument, and that it was time to get rid of him. Accordingly, when Jonathan was consorting with him on friendly terms in Ptolemaïs, he suddenly made him a prisoner. The news caused absolute panic at Jerusalem. But Simon rose to the occasion and caused the people to feel that they had yet a leader left. So instead of giving way to despair, the Jews pushed forward the defences of Jerusalem and took strong action at Joppa. It was already held by a Jewish garrison; now the whole population was turned out neck and crop, and replaced by Jewish families. Observe that the old policy of Judas, the

<sup>1</sup> Whether Judas had begun diplomatic relations with Rome is a vexed question. Schürer still holds the account of the mission sent by him authentic. Jonathan's negotiations are also questioned.



policy of *concentration*, which brought in the scattered Jewish colonies to Judæa, has now given place to a policy of *expansion*, which pushes new settlements of Jews beyond the limits of Judæa. And it is significant that the place seized thus early is the gate which allows direct communication between Jerusalem and the lands overseas.

Tryphon marched round Judæa, but the prospects did not seem favourable for invasion. When he reached the country beyond Jordan, he put Jonathan to death. Simon buried his brother at Modin, the city of his fathers, and as the last survivor of the Five Brethren, took up the inheritance. Soon after this (143-142) Tryphon murdered the boy-king Antiochus Dionysus and assumed the diadem himself, although not of the Seleucid family. His action snapped the last link which bound the Jews to his cause. Simon made overtures to Demetrius, whose court was ready to grant further concessions. These included complete immunity from all dues which had marked the Seleucid supremacy.<sup>1</sup> In the following year (142-141) the garrison in the *akra*, decimated by famine, at last surrendered. On the 23rd of Ijjar (May) 141 the victorious nationalists entered "with praise and palm branches and with harps and with cymbals and with viols and with hymns and with songs."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, while the Seleucid kingdom fell to pieces, the Jewish state looked round and found itself free.

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that by the former grant of Demetrius in 152 "all taxes were abolished except the golden crown to be paid upon the investiture of a new high priest," and that this also was now remitted. Reinach, "Jewish Coins" (Engl. trans. by Mary Hill: Lawrence and Bullen, 1903, p. 7).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Macc. xiii. 51.

"The yoke of the heathen was taken away from Israel." Jerusalem began a new era, and documents were dated "In the year 1, Simon being High-priest and General and Ruler of the Jews." And meanwhile the policy of expansion was followed up, where occasion offered. Even before the *akra* fell, the Jews had taken Gazara (Gezer) which commanded the road between Jerusalem and Joppa. And here too, as at Joppa, the heathen population was expelled and replaced by Jews. Twenty years from the time that Judas fell at Eleasa, the Hasmonæan house has climbed to this height. It has eliminated all competitors in the Jewish state; it has got free from foreign control. But it is still represented by one of the Five Brethren, and it might be a question whether its power did not rest upon their individual prestige, whether the family would retain it when the last of them was gone. This further point was secured in 141. In the September of that year an assembly of the Jewish people at Jerusalem ratified the high-priesthood which the Hasmonæans had hitherto held by the nomination of Gentile kings. Simon was to be Chief of the people and High-priest "for ever, until there should arise a prophet worthy of credence."<sup>1</sup> The people felt it necessary to add that, because the old line of high-priests had been of Divine appointment, and now, they would say, it is only because the Divine Will has not declared itself that they take upon themselves to establish another leader, provisionally. But, till a new revelation, Simon is to be "High-priest for ever," that is, his office is to be perpetuated in his sons.

The Jews however were soon to find out that

<sup>1</sup> 1 Macc. xiv. 41.

Judas. Hagan fell against Lycias. Then Jonathan Simon  
argued  
achieved

there was force left in the house of Seleucus still. In 140 Demetrius led out an expedition to recover the provinces conquered by the new power of the East, the Parthians, who already threatened, and had perhaps even overrun, Babylonia. But Demetrius himself fell into their hands, and the Parthian king Mithridates I. kept him a close prisoner. The younger brother of Demetrius, Antiochus VI., nicknamed Sidetes, landed in 138 in Syria to take his place, and carry on the war against Tryphon.

There is some reason to believe that the advent of Antiochus Sidetes brought the acquisition of another right to the Jews—the right of coining their own silver money. Coins have been found which some of the chief authorities in this field believe to have been struck at Jerusalem under Simon. The larger ones have on one side “Shekel of Israel” and on the other side “Jerusalem the Holy.”<sup>1</sup> But Antiochus had not been long in the kingdom before there were alarming signs of his intentions with regard to the Jews. Antiochus Sidetes was a very different character from his incapable brother, and had inherited the energy and ability of his father, the first Demetrius. It was the unauthorised aggressions of the Jews outside their own borders, the seizure of Joppa and Gazara, about which he addressed representations to Simon. The king’s subjects had been harried in other quarters too and he required that they should receive compensation. He was willing to allow the Jews to retain possession of Joppa and Gazara, but they must give a *quid pro quo*; he

<sup>1</sup> See Reinach, “Jewish Coins,” p. 10 f.

Alexander Balas murdered Demetrius I



Antiochus IV Epiphanes  
supplanted by Tryphon

END OF SIMON



Demetrius II

Antiochus V

(Sidel)

III

named 500 talents. He also demanded the same sum as indemnity for their depredations. It was, as far as we can judge, a moderate and rational demand.

Simon tried to bargain. He offered 100 talents. Antiochus thought the best answer was to order the governor of the Philistine coast to move a force into Judæa. The governor's attempt to do so was not fortunate. Simon was now too old to take the field, but his sons Judas and John commanded the Jewish army and drove the governor back into the plain. Antiochus could not for the time take further measures. He had still to recover a great part of the kingdom from Tryphon. When Tryphon had been crushed and the kingdom got in hand, Antiochus Sidetes resumed his measures for bringing back the Jewish state to allegiance. But when he did so, Simon was no longer there.

His end was tragic. There were other ambitious men among the Jews beside the sons of Hashmon; one of these was Ptolemy the son of Abub, who had married Simon's daughter. Ptolemy formed the design of seizing the first place. In the February of 135 he invited his old father-in-law to a carousal in his fortress of Dok, and then fell upon him while he was heavy with wine. But Ptolemy's plan was foiled by the promptitude of John the son of Simon, who at the time of the murder was in Gazara. Before Ptolemy could possess himself of Jerusalem, John was already there installed in the room of his father. In the very first year of his high-priesthood John had to sustain the attack of the restored Seleucid power.

Once more it was made plain that the Seleucid



power when united was more than a match for the Hasmonæan. Antiochus drove in the Jewish forces and laid siege to Jerusalem. John held out for at least a year; then he was obliged by the famine in the city to ask for terms. Before April 134<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem capitulated. In spite of the advice of his courtiers, who wanted him to revert to the policy of Antiochus Epiphanes, Antiochus Sidetes used his victory with moderation. He neither re-imposed tribute nor interfered in the internal affairs of Judæa. But he insisted on the disarmament of the people, the dismantling of Jerusalem, the payment of rent for Joppa and Gazara, and 500 talents indemnity. His moderation, and politic honours which he showed to the Temple, did as a matter of fact surprise the Jews. They named him Antiochus the Pious. Presently when he led his armies eastwards against the Parthians in 130, it included a Jewish contingent led by the high-priest John in person.

It is impossible to say how long the Jews would have acquiesced in their new subordination, if Antiochus Sidetes had continued to reign. But he perished in the Eastern war in 129, and his brother Demetrius, whom the Parthians had released in order to create embarrassments for Antiochus, came back to Syria. With Demetrius there also came back chaos and a tangle of wars between rival kings. Some of these might from time to time annoy the Jews, but with the death of Antiochus Sidetes all possibility of a Seleucid re-conquering Judæa vanished for ever. From now for sixty-five years the Jewish state was completely independent, as

<sup>1</sup> Reinach, "Jewish Coins," p. 16 f.



free as it had been in the days of the old kingdom of Judah. Between the period of Greek supremacy and the period of Roman supremacy came sixty-five years of freedom.

John the high-priest came back safe from the East, and resumed his functions at Jerusalem. He bore beside his Hebrew name of Johanan or John the surname of Hyrcanus. John Hyrcanus used his recovered independence to strengthen and enlarge his principality. North, south and west the Jewish state pushed forward its frontiers. In the north John laid the Hasmonæan yoke upon the hated kinsmen of the Jews, the Samaritans. He took their city of Shechem and destroyed the rival temple on Mount Gerizim. In the east, his armies advanced beyond Jordan and took the old Moabite town of Medeba. In the south he conquered the Edomites, so that his principality had now more than the extent of the old Davidic kingdom after its separation from Northern Israel. But in the case of the Edomites he adopted a policy which was of the most momentous consequence. He not only conquered them; he compelled them to conform to the Jewish law, to become Jews. He extended the limits, that is, not only of his dominion, but of the congregation of Israel. The descendants of these Edomites were, in the Jewish sense "fellow-citizens with the holy people, and of the household of God," although, as was natural, the Jews of purer blood claimed a higher social prestige and were apt to speak of their Edomite brethren contemptuously as "half Jews."

The last conquest of John Hyrcanus brought him into conflict with one of those members of the

*John Hyrcanus*  
 = John 3  
 of John 10  
 Hasmonæan  
 destroyed  
 Samaritan  
 temple

Seleucid house who were fighting over what remained of the ancestral dominion. Hyrcanus laid siege to Samaria. Let me remind you that Samaria was not a city of the Samaritans, whom Hyrcanus had already conquered. The Samaritans lived in the territory of Samaria, but their chief town was Shechem; Samaria itself was a heathen city, a Macedonian colony. When he had seen the investment of the city completed, Hyrcanus left his sons Antigonus and Aristobulus to prosecute the siege. Samaria sent a cry for help to Antiochus, nicknamed Cyzicenus, who was at that time in possession of part of Syria. Antiochus came up and attacked the besieging army of the Jews, but Antigonus and Aristobulus saved the honour of their house by defeating him signally. This was one of those cases, of which history knows a definite number, where a great event is alleged to have been immediately known at a distance by those interested in it; the high-priest, it is said, was officiating in the Temple, when he suddenly was aware of a voice which announced that his sons had won a victory over Antiochus.

Hostilities continued for a while between Antiochus or his generals and the Jews, with perhaps greater loss to the Jews than Josephus allows. But they did not make Antigonus and Aristobulus relax their grip upon Samaria. After a year's siege it fell, and the Jews did all they could to obliterate every trace of the city which they hated both from old memories of rivalry and for its recent character as a seat of the Gentiles. They turned the watercourses over its site. About the same time they got possession of another important Hellenistic

city of central Palestine, Scythopolis, the old Bethshan (about 108 B.C.).

Such military and conquering activity as all these events show us is not what we naturally associate with the idea of a Jewish high-priest. And in fact the Hasmonæans were taking on more and more the same aspect as the other kings and princes of the world. John Hyrcanus, we are told, was the first of his line to surround himself with a guard of foreign mercenaries, and he is said to have rifled the tomb of David to get the money wherewith to pay them. His son Aristobulus, who succeeded him in 104, took the final step of assuming the name of King.

In Jerusalem indeed and to the Jews themselves he was, if we may judge by his coins, still known by his Hebrew name of Judas and his title of high-priest, but to foreigners he showed himself in state as Aristobulus, the King of the Jews. Not only in its outward trappings, but in its inner character, the court of King Aristobulus showed its likeness to those of the other potentates. Here too family feuds and bloodshed became the order of the day. Aristobulus caused his mother to die of starvation in prison, and he imprisoned all his brothers, except Antigonus, whom he loved. But this exemption only gave room for Antigonus to incur suspicion, and his end was to be despatched by the swords of the king's body-guard. Even in his short reign Judas Aristobulus had time to add another conquest to those of his father. He carried the Jewish frontier farther north by subduing part of what was known as Galilee of the Gentiles, the *Region* of the Gentiles, the part inhabited by the Ituræans. These, like the Edomites, were forced to embrace Judaism,

*Aristobu*

*quest -  
Epiphane  
Aristobulus*

and Aristobulus was thus the creator of that Galilee which we know in our gospels—a region whose population is Jewish in belief and practice, but Gentile to a large degree in descent. You remember that the speech of the Galileans was noted as provincial at Jerusalem, and many of our Lord's apostles, for all we know, may have been of Ituræan extraction. This part of the work of the Hasmonæan dynasty, preparing as it did the field for Christ, was perhaps, of all that they did in the world, the thing of most durable consequence for the history of mankind.

Aristobulus only reigned for a year and was then succeeded by one of the brothers whom he had imprisoned (103 B.C.). This brother was called Jonathan, but he is generally known by the shortened form of the name, Jannai, Grecised as Jannæus, in addition to which he bore the genuine Greek name of Alexander. The reign of Alexander Jannæus marks the culminating period of the Hasmonæan dynasty, and we may pause at its threshold to ask what these last exciting sixty years meant for the inner life of the Jewish people. I do not know whether you, in listening to this lecture, have been as conscious as I in speaking, how little we have really touched the life of the people, in tracing the successive steps by which one family climbed to power and kingship. Little more than a series of four individuals—Jonathan, Simon, Hyrcanus, Aristobulus—has passed before your eyes; we have spoken of their ambitions and their exploits; but they are not the Jewish people. Unfortunately, when we try to look outside the courts and camps of kings, the ancient historians and other documents

give us very poor light, but we have to turn their fitful glimmer to the best use we can.

You will remember that we heard of a set of people in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes called the Hasîdîm, the godly ones, who were drawn together by their zeal for the Law and opposition to all Hellenistic innovations. We saw that when the sons of Hashmon began the fight for religion the Hasîdîm gave them their support, but that later on, when Judas had gone on to fight for the ends of national and dynastic ambition, there were signs of a coldness toward the Hasmonæan house on the part of the Hasîdîm. After that we lose sight of them. But they represent a tendency in the community which under one name or another always went on—the tendency to concentrate all interest and energy upon the Law, the pursuit of righteousness, and to regard political and military ambitions with more or less of indifference. To this frame of mind the rise of the Hasmonæan family would hardly present itself a national glory; it would be rather inclined to scrutinise their title to the high-priesthood and the way they exercised the sacred office. But we cannot doubt that the rise of a native dynasty stirred the great mass of the people with pride and indefinite hopes. And we should not have been able to mark off sharply those governed by one tendency and those governed by the other; in most men both would have blended in varying proportions. Those set upon worldly triumphs would in most cases have told themselves that their swords were bringing new glory and dominion to the Law; and many of those most earnestly religious would have seen the goodness of God in the grow-



ing strength of the Jewish state under its priestly chiefs.

*Book*  
*Enoch*  
This last way of viewing things is reflected for us in a document which belongs to a time of military successes, one of those writings which have been combined to make up the book of *Enoch* as we now have it. Its form shows the influence of the book of *Daniel* in creating a new type of literature, the Apocalypse. According to a method characteristic of apocalyptic writings, the developments of history are represented by a procession of symbolical animals. Israel is a race of white sheep, the nations who oppress them are lions, boars, eagles, and so on. It is conceived that when God delivered up His people to subjection to the Gentiles, He put them under the charge of a number of angels, who were to watch over them in turn, one by one, and see that no more destruction was done upon them by the Gentiles than the exact amount prescribed by God. These angels are typified as seventy shepherds, and their successive watches cover the whole period from the Babylonian captivity to the final redemption. The excessive sufferings of Israel are accounted for by the fact that the shepherd-angels have been unfaithful to their trust and allowed more destruction to take place than was ordained—a sin for which they will one day be cast into the lake of fire. In reviewing that part of the history which we have traversed in these lectures, the writer mentions the restoration of the Temple after the Exile, and it is noteworthy that to the view of the religious circle which he represents the succeeding epoch was marked by a spiritual blindness in the people and an imperfection in the holy ritual. The bread offered

in the second Temple "was polluted and not pure. And besides all this the eyes of these sheep were blinded so that they saw not."<sup>1</sup> Later on, under the Greek supremacy is formed the party of the Hasîdîm and an attempt is made at revival. "Behold, lambs were born by those white sheep and they began to open their eyes and to see, and to cry to the sheep. But the sheep did not cry to them and did not hear what they said to them, but were exceedingly deaf, and their eyes were exceedingly and forcibly blinded."<sup>2</sup> Then came the brunt of persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes and the murder of Oniah. "The ravens," *i.e.*, the Seleucid government, "flew upon those lambs and took one of those lambs, and dashed the sheep in pieces and devoured them." After this the faithful Jews began armed resistance, but were at first overpowered by the royal forces. "Horns grew upon those lambs, and the ravens cast down their horns." At the call of the Hasmonæan leader, the people were at last nerved with a great enthusiasm; the fatal apathy which had allowed the encroachments of Hellenism came to an end; the nation rallied around its chief. "And I saw till a great horn of one of those sheep branched forth, and their eyes were opened. And it looked at them and their eyes opened, and it cried to the sheep, and the rams saw it and all ran to it. . . . And those ravens fought and battled with it and sought to destroy his horn, but they had no power over it." The struggle is still going on between the sheep with the great horn and a gathering volume of enemies, Gentiles and Hellenising Jews, "eagles and vultures and ravens and kites and all the sheep

<sup>1</sup> Enoch lxxxix. 73, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Enoch xc. 6, 7.

of the field" (*i.e.*, wild sheep), and the writer looks for it to be ended only by the appearance of God Himself for judgment. Then the earth will engulf all the enemies of Israel, and the judgment-throne will be set up in "the pleasant land" and the Lord of the sheep will sit upon it to judge the seventy unfaithful shepherds. The end of the vision is concerned with the final beatitude of Israel. I think Professor Charles has made out a good case for believing this writing to belong to the early days of the wars of independence and for seeing in the horned sheep Judas Maccabæus himself. At any rate it belongs to a time when a writer who evidently represents the standpoint of the Hasîdîm can see a God-given saviour in the Hasmonæan chief.

In appearance the victory of the Hasmonæans was a victory of the party of righteousness over the party of worldliness. But as in the case of so many other apparent victories, when we look closer we see that it was really a compromise. No doubt, all those in the ranks of the Jerusalem aristocracy who had involved themselves deeply in Hellenism were exterminated by the victorious Hasmonæans. But there remained a number of rich priestly families whose Judaism was sufficiently correct to ensure them their place in the purified community, but for whom it was impossible to maintain long the high religious tension which characterised the Hasîdîm. The thoughts of such men, even if temporarily exalted in the days of crisis, would soon come to earth again and move on the old levels. The spirit which had been embodied in the sons of Tobiah would soon find new entrance into the circles of the rich and noble. On the

other hand, it was no longer possible for them to go the lengths of Jason and Menelaus. This, at any rate, the religious party had secured, that there was to be no overt breach with the Law, no visible sign of idolatry, no tampering with the sacred ritual. The spirit that had been the spirit of the Hellenisers was not exorcised, but it was kept within bounds.

The two spirits which worked in the body of Judaism found expression in the two parties whose names first became current, we are told, under the early Hasmonæan chiefs—the parties of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees seem to be just the old Hasîdîm under a new designation, *Ph'riṣhayyâ*, “those who separate themselves.” They were those whose preoccupation was to realise in the fullest way the ideal of legal purity, absolute separation from everything that defiled. But upon what did the distinction between clean and unclean rest? Not on any ascertainable quality in things themselves, but on the prescriptions of the Law. If therefore we set out to avoid every contact with what is unclean, we must above all things observe in the strictest possible way every direction of the Law. But the moment we try to do so, we are confronted in our every-day life with a thousand doubtful questions: no code can give more than general rules, which need continual sharper definition as they are applied to practice. The Law, for instance, can tell us to do no work and to carry no burden on the Sabbath day, but if we are to run no risk of transgressing we must know what exactly constitutes “work” and what constitutes a “burden.” It is easy to laugh at the absurd pettiness of the questions with which the Pharisees

*Pharisees  
and Sadducees*

came in time to be occupied, whether one might eat an egg laid on the Sabbath, and so on; but if you once set out in making conformity to a written code the guiding principle of your life, I should like to know where you are to stop short of such questions. After all, the problem of the egg was presented in daily life and had to be decided one way or the other. We may call the Pharisaic casuistry a *reductio ad absurdum* of their principle, if we will; but granting their principle, there seems no escape from the casuistry. But further, if a law is to be applied to life, and we are not to decide the doubtful questions by our own judgment, there must be some authority beside the law to fix its interpretation for us in reference to each case that occurs—an authority that holds the position of a judge in English law. This the Pharisees found in the schools of "Scribes," whose business it was to hand on, and to define by fresh decisions, the "tradition of the elders." Just as in the case of English Common Law, the verdicts of judges become part of the Law, so the Pharisee held that the decisions of a recognised teacher of the Law, which he gave, of course, not on his personal authority, but as the exponent of a tradition, became, under certain conditions, legally binding upon him. There were scribes who were not Pharisees, and whose decisions the Pharisees repudiated, but for the most part the scribes were themselves Pharisees, that is, they recognised as binding the same body of tradition as the Pharisaic party generally and made this the basis of their own pronouncements. To the Pharisee then the commands of the written Law



were supplemented, or rather, as he believed, defined, by an ever-growing body of oral tradition. This tradition was known as Hălākāh, that is "Walking," what we should express as "every-day practice," and in the later Judaism, which was Pharisaism developed, we find the startling declaration: "It is a sorer offense to teach things contrary to the ordinances of the scribes, than to teach things contrary to the written Law."

But the elaboration of the Halakah was not the only occupation of the scribe; he had also to hand on the tradition which supplemented the written history by additional matter of a narrative kind or which defined belief as to the spiritual world. This kind of tradition was called Aggādāh, "Teaching." We saw how the fiery trial through which the faithful passed under Antiochus Epiphanes caused the dark beyond death to be illuminated for them with new light, how it made the hope of the resurrection, of a world not like this world, where all the injustices of this present life should be redressed, a part of the heritage of Israel. But such hopes were not welcomed by all the Jewish people; many, when life here, under native princes, once more became tolerable, were quite content, like their fathers, not to look beyond it. For instance, take the first book of the *Maccabees*, composed at any rate after the accession of John Hyrcanus. In contrast to 2 *Maccabees*, which lays stress on the future life, the author of 1 *Maccabees* in all his account of the persecution, of the motives which nerved Judas and his friends, never alludes to any hope in a world to come; with him, it is still the good name, the memorial in Israel, which

is paramount, as it was with Ben-Sira in pre-Macca-  
bæan days.<sup>1</sup> We could not, of course, argue from this  
that the writer repudiated the idea; but if he held  
it, it had fallen into the background. It was in the  
Pharisaic Aggadah that these hopes were preserved.  
There was much in it of fancy, of mere visionary  
refuse, but it focussed for the thought of Israel  
the ideas of the future beyond and the Messianic  
kingdom, and was it not better that these should be  
handed on, in however fantastic a dress, than that  
the prospect should be bounded by the grave?

The great priestly families stood, as a class,  
aloof from the Pharisaic movement. Of the two  
alternative explanations of the name *Sadducees*,  
that which connects it with the Hebrew word for  
"righteous" (*saddîk*) and that which connects it  
with the proper name Zadok (*Sadôk*, or according  
to one pronunciation *Saddûk*), it is the latter ex-  
planation which now has the balance of learned  
opinion on its side. The Sadducees were the party  
which took its tone from the great priestly families,  
the "sons of Zadok." They represented the other  
spirit in Israel and found this world so good a place  
to live in that they desired no other. They were  
antagonistic to the developments of Pharisaic piety  
both in the field of Halakah and in that of Agga-  
dah. They desired, of course, that the ritual and  
ceremonial law, so far as it was definitely laid down in  
the written Mosaic code, should be maintained. It  
was, after all, the basis of their own revenues. But  
they had not that ardour, that craving for righteous-  
ness, which could make the burden of the Pharisaic  
Halakah tolerable. They were bound to have their

<sup>1</sup> See for instance 1 Macc. ii. 51, 64; vi. 44; ix. 10.

traditions as to the way the Law should be carried out in practice, but they refused to make the authority of their scribes absolute, to submit themselves blindly to their direction. They were equally averse from all the new lore of angels and spirits, of invisible worlds and resurrection, contained in the Pharisaic Aggadah; in so far as they were true to their profession, they stood by the solid common-sense morality which had been inculcated upon their fathers by such teachers as Ben-Sira. It is sometimes said that the Sadducees were analogous to the modern rationalists. The comparison is not a happy one. All analogies between the ancient and the modern are liable to be misleading, but if I had to find an English parallel to the Sadducees, it would rather be those in the eighteenth century who adhered to the church of the fashionable classes, resenting any religious claim upon them outside the routine of conventional decencies, and bitterly opposed the fantastic "enthusiasm," as they called it, of the followers of Wesley.

Sadduceism was the religion of the noble, the well-to-do; the Pharisees were the party of the people. Adoption as an "associate" (*hābēr*) in the company of those who would take upon them in its fullest extent the yoke of the Law was open to the poorest. Of course, the people as a whole did not become Pharisees, but they regarded the Pharisees with immense reverence. The influence of the Pharisaic doctors was very great with the multitude. It was so great that we are told the Sadducean priests had in matters of ritual actually to conform to the Pharisaic rules from the pressure of public opinion. And it is because the opposi-

tion of Pharisees and Sadducees was to some extent that opposition of pious poor and hard-hearted rich which was of old standing in Israel (in the Psalms, you remember, "poor" and "pious" are almost synonymous) that in criminal justice the Pharisees were noted for being the more lenient.

I think it will be apparent to you that as soon as the Hasmonæans were established in the state as the dominant family among the priestly aristocracy, their natural affinities would be rather with the other families of the ruling class than with the religious enthusiasts by whose support they had risen to power. It was almost inevitable that their alienation from the Pharisees should become wider and wider, and their understanding with the Sadducees closer. Probably the Pharisaic party were offended by Jonathan's assumption of the high-priesthood, but there does not seem to have been any open antagonism during the first generation of Hasmonæans, the generation under whose leading the "godly ones" had waged war. It was not till John Hyrcanus had succeeded his father, that the Pharisees and the Hasmonæan house openly parted company. It was when some bold voice among the Pharisees spoke out at last before the Hasmonæan chief and demanded point blank that he should cease to usurp the high-priesthood, whether he continued to hold the political supremacy or not, that John Hyrcanus became a declared enemy of the Pharisees and even tried to put down their distinctive practices by force.

After this we are prepared to find that the great-nephew of Judas Maccabæus, King Aristobulus, the murderer of his mother and brother, was

noted as a friend of the Greeks. The Gentile writers of the time, from whom Strabo's information was ultimately derived, spoke well of him. The crimes of the palace did not show so much in the eyes of the world, as to counteract the impression of enlightened civility, of the absence of any narrow Jewish fanaticism, in the Hasmonæan king.

Aristobulus, as we saw, was succeeded by his brother Jannæus Alexander. Now, while the Seleucid and Ptolemaïc dynasties were in the convulsions of death, while the Roman legions were still unknown to Syria, the Jewish kingdom for a space had its turn as the dominant power in Palestine. From the time of his accession to the time of his death King Alexander was a fighter and a conqueror. He belonged to the type of barbaric chieftain, fierce and sensual, whose life alternated between bloody raids and the gross indulgence of his palace. Sometimes his plans were impeded by one or other of the representatives of the houses of Seleucus or Ptolemy appearing upon the scene with an army, as in the vicissitudes of their own unending broils they had an opportunity of doing so. But such interferences were only momentary checks. By the end of his reign of twenty-seven years he had pushed out the frontiers of his kingdom on all sides. His power extended north as far as the Lake of Merom, on the west over the Philistine coast from Carmel to the Egyptian frontier, on the east over Bashan and Gilead beyond Jordan. These regions, as we saw, were covered with cities of Greek culture. But to Greek culture King Jannæus was no friend; as far as destruction went, he was a good Jew. The policy of com-

*Alexander  
Jannæus*



pling the conquered, if possible, to embrace Judaism was still followed. Under the blast of the Jewish conquests, civilisation in Palestine withered away. Where there had been prosperous cities were heaps of ruins. Fields went back to brushwood, and roaming bands of marauders had free course in the land. Such a state of things marked the zenith of the Hasmonæan power.

King Jannæus Alexander, we must not forget, was also the High-priest of the Lord. But if the relations between Hyrcanus and the Pharisees had been bad, things were far worse under Jannæus. The Pharisees had the people with them, and one day—it was the Feast of Tabernacles—when the high-priest was officiating in the Temple, the people fell to pelting him with the lemons which they carried by the custom of the feast. Jannæus set his mercenaries—wild men from the hills of Asia Minor—upon them, and there was some blood spilt in Jerusalem. The people were henceforward only quiet, so long as they thought the king's hand strong enough to hold them down. Presently, their chance came. Jannæus had become involved in a war with the King of the Nabatæans; for the Nabatæan power also had grown great at this epoch of confusion, and was the one power which could seriously challenge the Jewish supremacy in Palestine. Jannæus met with a bad reverse somewhere beyond Jordan, and when he reappeared at Jerusalem with only the shadow of his army, the Jews rose. Then came an unnatural war in which the great-nephew of Judas Maccabæus fought on one side, with an army consisting in part of Greek troops, and the Jewish people on the other. To complete the

strangeness of the situation the Jewish people in their extremity appealed to a successor of Antiochus Epiphanes—a Seleucid prince who reigned as King Demetrius III. Eukairos in Damascus. Demetrius came to the help of the Jews against their king, and in a battle near Shechem Jannæus was crushingly defeated. After this, however, the prospect of having a Seleucid once more over them made numbers of the Jews desert the Pharisaïc cause for that of Jannæus, and Demetrius, who was not in a position to carry on the war without them, drew back again to Damascus. Still the more ardent spirits did not give in. But their leaders were driven by Jannæus into some fortress and captured. And now came the crowning scene of the Hasmonæan high-priest's triumph in Jerusalem. Josephus describes it for us—Jannæus holding carousal with the women of his harem, and below, where the feasters can see them, a spectacle of eight hundred crosses, every one with its tormented body, and some with dead bodies besides at their foot—the dead bodies of those most loved by the men upon the crosses, butchered before their dying eyes.

The king after this was no more troubled by insurrection. What remained of the Pharisaïc party, some 8000 men, we are told, fled beyond the reach of his arm.

Jannæus died campaigning in 76 B.C. at the siege of some fortress beyond Jordan. He left his political power to his wife, his high-priesthood to his son. Josephus tells us that on his death-bed he urged her to make peace with the Pharisees. One would like to know whether this

is true, and, if it is true, whether his motive was a troubled conscience or policy.

In the collection of writings which make up the book of *Enoch*, the vision to which we referred just now—it represented, you will remember, the Hasmonæan prince as the champion and restorer of Israel—is followed by another writing, whose contrast shows that revulsion in the attitude of the religious party which had taken place in the interval between their two dates. It is a torrent of denunciation against the wicked rich, the “men of earth,” in terms which obviously suggested the language used in the Epistle of St. James. “Woe to you, ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches and from your riches ye shall depart, because ye have not remembered the Most High in the days of your riches. Ye have committed blasphemy and unrighteousness and have become ready for the day of slaughter and the day of darkness and the day of great judgment.”<sup>1</sup> “Woe to you, ye mighty, who with might oppress the righteous; for the day of your destruction will come.”<sup>2</sup> We recognise the features of the Sadducean aristocracy, when we find these rich men reproached for not keeping separate from sinners,<sup>3</sup> for putting forth writings which tend to seduce men from the Law,<sup>4</sup> for refusing to protect the people of which they are rulers from those “who devoured and dispersed and murdered them.”<sup>5</sup> When the righteous die, these sinners speak over them, saying, “As we die, so die the righteous, and what benefit do they reap from their deeds? Behold,

<sup>1</sup> xciv. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> xcvi. 8.

<sup>3</sup> xcvi. 4; xcix. 2.

<sup>4</sup> xcvi. 15; civ. 10.

<sup>5</sup> ciii. 14, 15.

even as we, so do they die in grief and darkness, and what advantage have they over us? from henceforth we are equal.”<sup>1</sup> It was the old question put to Ben-Sira, but the Pharisaic writer has a better answer to it than Ben-Sira, for he bids the righteous know most assuredly “that all goodness and joy and glory are prepared for them, and are written down for the spirits of those who have died in righteousness.” “The spirits of you who die in righteousness will live and rejoice and be glad, and their spirits will not perish, but their memorial will be before the face of the Great One unto all generations of the world.”<sup>2</sup> “Be hopeful; for aforetime we were put to shame through ills and affliction; but soon ye will shine as the stars of heaven, ye will shine and ye will be seen, and the portals of heaven will be opened to you.”<sup>3</sup> “Ye will become companions of the host of heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cii. 6, 7.<sup>2</sup> ciii. 3, 4.<sup>3</sup> civ. 2.<sup>4</sup> civ. 6.

## V

### THE FALL OF THE HASMONÆANS AND THE DAYS OF HEROD

WE have followed the steps by which the Hasmonæan family raised itself to the chief power in the Jewish community, obtained possession of the high-priesthood, added to the priestly dignity the state of kings, and achieved, as kings, a series of conquests. The expansion of their power had reached its limits at the death of Jannæus Alexander in 76, and Queen Alexandra, his widow who succeeded him, rested upon her throne, a Solomonic reign of peace again following the reign of battles. But the reign of Alexandra—or Salome, by her Hebrew name—is chiefly remarkable as the one moment, when the Pharisees, so lately persecuted and afflicted, so soon to be persecuted again, had a brief enjoyment of political power. Salome Alexandra, whether from her own inclination or from the death-bed counsels of her husband, was altogether in their hands. Hence, her days in rabbinic tradition are a time of miraculous blessedness. The rain used to fall regularly at the most convenient moment, when travellers might not be abroad, during the night before the Sabbath-day, “so that the grains of wheat became as large as kidneys, those of barley like the stones of olives, and the lentils like gold *denarii*.” But under the surface of peace the



disease of the state was still active. The Pharisees would not forego the opportunity to have their revenge. It was perhaps not unnatural that the memory of those 800 crosses should inflame them. There were fresh executions in Jerusalem, only now it was the members of the aristocracy who fell, those who had shared in the warlike enterprises of Jannæus and were held to have abetted him in his crimes. The Sadducean nobility, joined to the Hasmonæan house in common ambitions and political interests, devoted to the national dynasty, now saw itself abandoned by the queen to slaughter. It beset her with bitter reproaches and found a champion in the younger son of the late king, Aristobulus. The elder son Hyrcanus, who officiated as high-priest under his mother's rule, was a feeble helpless creature, who had no desires beyond a quiet life.

The military element in the Jewish community had been mainly on the side of Jannæus, and it was this element whose discontent became dangerous. Alexandra was obliged to leave most of the strong places of the kingdom in their hands. When the queen at last fell ill and Aristobulus ranged the country, calling upon the garrisons to rise, they readily joined him. The terrified leaders of the people clamoured about the bed of the queen; but it was too late; there was no help more for them in Alexandra; while the rebels were gathering outside Jerusalem, she passed away (B.C. 67).

We are now on the threshold of that time in whose convulsions the Hasmonæan house perished, and it will be difficult, I fear, to present the course of events in any way that does not leave you with

*Aristobulus*

the impression of mere tumultuous confusion. Note for one thing, that the circumstances of the Jewish state are no longer such as they have been since the break-up of the Seleucid kingdom. That break-up, as we saw, made a space for the free action of the smaller states of Syria—the Jews, the Nabatæans, and others—so that we were able to follow the movements of the Jewish state without much reference to the events of the larger world. But now this is so no more. The great powers of west and east, Rome and Parthia, drew under their dominion the lands which had been ruled by Alexander and Seleucus, and every convulsion through which the huge Roman state passed in its course of transformation from a republic to a monarchy had its effect in Judæa. Let me try at any rate to fix for you the leading personalities and the main outline of events.

Aristobulus we have already seen as the champion of the Sadducean nobility; he inherited the fierce spirit, and followed the policy, of his father. The Pharisees, when Alexandra was gone, made an effort to check his advance upon Jerusalem, but the Jewish soldiery were on his side, and after Aristobulus had won a victory near Jericho, it was agreed that he, although the younger son, should become king and high-priest, and that Hyrcanus should retire into private life. But now we first detect a sinister figure standing behind Hyrcanus, and working his own designs through the person of the passive elder son of Jannæus. You remember that the Jews had compelled the Idumæans to become one people with themselves. This action bore bitter fruit to the Jews. It had come about

Rise of Antipater } Aristobulus &  
Hyrcanus

## ANTIPATER THE IDUMÆAN

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that under Jannæus a prominent Idumæan called Antipas had held the post of governor in his native province. His son Antipater was at this moment a person of influence in Jerusalem, and the history of the following years consists in large part of a stubborn conflict of battle and intrigue between Antipater the Idumæan on one side, with Hyrcanus for his tool, and the old nobility upon the other led by Aristobulus II. and later on by his sons. The first retirement therefore of Hyrcanus was soon cancelled by Antipater, and he opened war upon the younger brother. In the course of that long struggle Jerusalem was wrested to and fro between Antipater or Antipater's son and the younger Hasmonæan princes, so that by marking plainly in our minds their respective turns of possession we shall best have this period in intelligible shape before our minds. Aristobulus, you see, is in possession to start with, and the first move of Antipater is to call the Nabatæan power upon the scene, in order to reinstate Hyrcanus. He made Hyrcanus flee to Petra, the Nabatæan capital; and he induced the Nabatæan king, Aretas III. Phil-hellen, to invade Judæa. So that in 65, two years after the death of Queen Alexandra, what we see is Aristobulus beleaguered on the Temple-hill, and the Nabatæan army with Antipater and Hyrcanus round about Jerusalem.

But now we must look beyond Judæa at the great events taking place in the world. It was, I suppose, certain that, the Seleucid kingdom having broken up, some other great power or powers would ultimately seize the inheritance. Twenty years before this time, three competitors had stood

before the world. Firstly there was Rome, which had become an Asiatic power by taking over the Pergamene kingdom in Asia Minor; secondly, there was the kingdom of Pontus in Asia Minor, then represented by the great Mithridates; and thirdly, there was Armenia, which suddenly expanded into a great power under Tigranes. Mithridates and Tigranes were for the time allied in a common dread of Rome. In 83 B.C. the Armenians invaded Syria and swept away the miserable claimants to the Seleucid throne before them. Northern Syria became a province of Armenia. The Armenian flood came southward till it touched the fringes of the Jewish kingdom. That was in the days of Queen Alexandra, and she made haste to conciliate the new conqueror by embassies and presents. But before she died the Armenian peril had passed away. The first of the competitors I mentioned, Rome, had closed in bitter earnest with its rivals. The Armenian king had to withdraw his armies from Syria in 69 to face the legions of Lucullus in the heart of his kingdom. Three years later (66) the conduct of the eastern war was committed by Rome to Pompey, and the ensuing campaigns not only drove Mithridates northward to the Crimea, but made Pompey master of the whole of Asia up to the Euphrates, and entailed upon him the task of carrying through a fresh settlement and organisation of these lands in the name of Rome. In this way the Jewish princes who were quarrelling over the Hasmonæan inheritance suddenly found that battles fought far away had given the disposal of these things into a new hand. When Pompey's lieutenant appeared in 65 at Damascus, an im-

Rome  
Pontus  
Armenia

perious word caused the Nabatæan army to vanish from Jerusalem, and the war between the two brothers was transferred to another field, the audience-chamber of the Roman officer, and was waged with weapons of a more precious metal than iron. In 63 Pompey himself came to Damascus, and it throws some light upon the real significance of the Hasmonæan dynasty, when we learn that, beside the two brothers, there came from Jerusalem an embassy which spoke for the Jewish people, and begged the conqueror to relieve them altogether of kings, and restore the old order under which their fathers had lived in quietness. Pompey gave no definite answer to any petitioner and advanced on Jerusalem. Once more the holy soil was trodden by the armies of a great Gentile power. The days of national independence were over.

Before Pompey reached Jerusalem, he had made Aristobulus, whose conduct had been suspicious, a prisoner. But all that was most warlike in the Jewish people had looked upon Aristobulus as their leader, and even with their king a prisoner, they would not surrender the city to the Gentile. On the other hand Antipater the Idumæan knew the power of the Roman arms. From now onwards his policy, and the policy of his house, never wavered; always to be a friend of Rome, or when the Roman oligarchy was itself divided into warring camps, of whichever side for the time was predominant. So that when Pompey actually appeared before the city, the party of Hyrcanus, that is, of course, of Antipater, was for letting him in. The party of Aristobulus abandoned the rest of the city and took refuge on the fortified Temple-hill. It



became necessary for Pompey to undertake a regular siege of the Temple. The party of Hyrcanus showed themselves zealous allies. The third month of the siege on a Sabbath day the Temple was taken. And if we have had great fault to find with the priesthood, it is fair to remember the conduct of those priests who were officiating in the Temple courts when the enemy broke in. They went quietly on with their service as if nothing unusual were happening, and were cut down as they stood. Is it that a fearless piety still lived on in the lower ranks of the priesthood, or have we an example of high-bred aristocratic pride?

Like Antiochus Epiphanes, Pompey insisted on entering the innermost sanctuary of the Temple. But, although doubtless the Jews felt the outrage, the comparison with Antiochus made Pompey's conduct seem mild. For he abstained from taking away any of the riches which he saw, and he did not attempt to interfere with the Jewish religion. It was only the political status and the territorial extent of the Jewish state which suffered by his arrangements. There was to be no more any king; Hyrcanus was to be high-priest only, with the functions, and perhaps the title, of *ethnarch*; the Jewish state was to be a division of the Roman province of Syria, which Pompey now called into being, and pay tribute to Rome. A great part of the conquests of the Jews outside Judæa were detached—they still retained Galilee and Idumæa—and the ravages they wrought in the neighbouring lands were repaired; once more cities of Greek culture arose from their humiliation or their ruins. Aristobulus Pompey took with him to Rome, and when Pompey went in triumphal

procession, the Hasmonæan prince had to walk in the train of captives before the eyes of a Roman crowd.

From 63 to 40, Hyrcanus holds the high-priesthood and Antipater the power in Jerusalem. But they were far from quiet years; during them the Roman state was torn with civil war. First came the war between the oligarchy and Julius Cæsar from 49 to 45, in the course of which Pompey, the leader on the republican side, was assassinated on the Egyptian sea-shore, in 48. Then came the murder of Cæsar in 44 and the war between the oligarchs on the side under Brutus and Cassius, and Mark Antony and Cæsar's nephew Octavian on the other, at the conclusion of which Antony became master of the eastern provinces of Rome and made a number of changes in their government.

Now through all these storms Hyrcanus and Antipater maintained their seat, but their position was affected by the successive crises. For the first fourteen years, from 63 to 48, the Roman world was still governed by the Republic, and Syria obeyed a series of *proconsuls*, according to the system established by Pompey. The spirit of the Roman government in this period toward the Jews was one of severe coercion. In 57 the power of Hyrcanus seems to have been still further reduced by the proconsul Gabinius, so that nothing but his religious functions were left him, whilst the Jewish territory itself was divided into five administrative districts. In 54 the next proconsul, Marcus Crassus robbed the Temple of a great part of its riches. This period also saw a succession of attempts on the part of the other Hasmonæan princes to raise Judæa in

their interest. We can count three. The first rising was headed by Alexander, the son of Aristobulus in 57; it was defeated by Gabinius, under whom Mark Antony served as a young officer, and was ended by the reduction of the fortress Alexandrium, where Alexander made his last stand. Alexander was captured, but not put to death. The second rising in 56 was headed by Aristobulus himself and another son called Antigonus, who had both escaped from captivity; this likewise was defeated by Gabinius, and ended by the reduction of Machærus, the fortress where John the Baptist afterwards was beheaded; Aristobulus was caught again and sent back to Rome. The third attempt was made by Alexander again in 55, and ended in his force being shattered by Gabinius near Mount Tabor. Even after this the peace of the land was troubled by Jewish bands, till the quæstor Cassius about 51 acting as governor after the death of Marcus Crassus—you know this Cassius as the murderer of Cæsar later on—sold 30,000 of them into slavery.

In 49 hostilities began between Julius Cæsar and the Roman oligarchs under Pompey, and in the next year Cæsar won the decisive battle of Pharsalus in Greece, which was followed by Pompey's assassination by the people of King Ptolemy when he tried to land in Egypt. The moment the fortune of the war had declared itself, Antipater was a devoted friend of Cæsar's, and was really useful to him during the campaign in Egypt in 47. In consequence the Jews got back by Cæsar's new regulations much that they had lost under the republican régime. The five administra-

tive districts were once more united under the authority of the high-priest, who was now allowed to call himself *ethnarch*. They also recovered some of the territory taken away by Pompey, and notably the harbour-town of Joppa, which was of such consequence to them. It is worth remarking that at Rome also Julius Cæsar was conspicuous as a friend of the Jews. Of course, the situation changed again at his murder in 44. Now it was the forces of the oligarchy under Cassius who occupied Syria, and Antipater was prompt with his services to the power in possession. Although the Jews of Palestine suffered fearfully from the exactions and severities of Cassius, nothing could wear out the patience and diligence of the supple Idumæan. But his life and scheming were cut short at this moment by a private feud. He was poisoned by one of the Jewish notables, who hoped to supplant him in his place of power.

We may pause here and turn from the series of political events, in order to listen to a voice coming from the inner life of the Jewish people. There is a book called the *Psalter of Solomon*, a collection of nineteen psalms, known to us in a Greek translation. By means of it we can regard the features of that troublous time as they are reflected in the ardent thought and feeling of the Pharisaic saints who lived through it. The fierce partisan spirit which agitated those of their brethren who fought for Hyrcanus or for Aristobulus does not prevail in their quiet circle; they stand aloof from the struggle of factions, and only see the sadness of it, when the blood of Israelites, of "the dwellers in Jerusalem, is poured out like water" by the Gentile

conqueror.<sup>1</sup> It was with terror, and anguish for the land and city, that they saw Pompey draw near.<sup>2</sup> "It is the sound of a mighty people as of an exceeding mighty wind! It is as the tempest of a mighty fire rushing through the wilderness. . . . My loins were broken at the hearing thereof; my knees were loosed; my heart was afraid; my bones were shaken like flax."<sup>3</sup> And then the reception of Pompey by the party of Hyrcanus seemed to them to show that the leaders of the people had lost all sense of their degradation, of the terrible blow which this man "from the utmost part of the earth,"<sup>4</sup> this unclean alien,<sup>5</sup> had come to deal Israel. "The princes of the land met him with joy; they said unto him, Blessed is thy path! Come ye, enter in with peace. They made the rough paths even before their entering in, they opened the gates that led into Jerusalem; her walls they crowned with garlands. He entered in as a father entereth into his sons' house, in peace."<sup>6</sup> There followed the dreadful days of the siege of the Temple, when "the strongholds, yea and the wall of Jerusalem were occupied" by the Gentile,<sup>7</sup> when he "cast down fenced walls with a battering-ram," and when "strange peoples went up against thine altar, and trampled it down with their sandals in their pride."<sup>8</sup> The Psalmists were no friends of Aristobulus and the nobility, but when they saw the blood run in the holy places, when they saw the great men of the Jewish senate carried off to be a derision to the heathen in the far West,<sup>9</sup> they were grieved

<sup>1</sup> Ps. viii. 23.<sup>4</sup> Ps. viii. 16.<sup>7</sup> Ps. viii. 21.<sup>2</sup> Ps. i. 2.<sup>5</sup> Ps. xvii. 9; ii. 1.<sup>8</sup> Ps. ii. 1, 2.<sup>3</sup> Ps. viii. 2, 5, 6.<sup>6</sup> Ps. viii. 18-20.<sup>9</sup> Ps. xvii. 14.



for the affliction of their people and moved to cry out "Do thou chasten us in thy good pleasure, but give us not over to the Gentiles."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing however was farther from their thoughts than to question the justice of the visitation. To "justify God," to "justify the judgments of God" is with them an essential part of piety.<sup>2</sup> And they draw in blackest colours the sins which had cried to heaven. Jerusalem had fermented with secret abominations,<sup>3</sup> and shameful things had been wrought openly before the sun.<sup>4</sup> But, above all, the immorality of the priesthood and the Hasmonæan usurpation they find no language too strong to condemn. In the fourth Psalm, composed perhaps before the blow had fallen, their voice as they denounce the profane one who sits in the Council, the wicked Sadducee magnate, breaks in an explosion of cursing. The Hasmonæans had seized upon the sacred office, which no heir of the true line was there to claim, but their service was a sacrilege. "The holy things of God they took for spoil; and there was no inheritor to deliver out of their hand. They went up to the altar of the Lord when they were full of all uncleanness; yea, even in their separation they polluted the sacrifices, eating them like profane meats. They left not a sin undone, wherein they offended not above the heathen."<sup>5</sup> They had usurped not only the high-priesthood, but the kingship, which belonged to the house of David. "Thou, O Lord, didst choose David to be king over Israel, and didst swear unto him touching his seed for ever, that his kingdom should not fail before thee. But when

*Pss  
of Solomon*

<sup>1</sup> Ps. vii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. ii. 16; iv. 9; viii. 31.

<sup>3</sup> i. 7; viii. 9*f*.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. ii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. viii. 12-14.

we sinned, sinners rose up against us; they fell upon us and thrust us out: even they to whom thou madest no promise, took away our place with violence.”<sup>1</sup> This disillusionment, after all the hopes which had centred in the national dynasty, made the old words of promise to the house of David acquire a new force and meaning to the apprehension of the faithful. The authors of these psalms look away from the wickedness and shame of their time, from the Hasmonæan kingdom with its draggled purple and sordid glories, to another king, whom God Himself shall raise up unto Israel at the time ordained<sup>2</sup> —the Son of David, realising in his own person that ideal of purity after which the Pharisee strove, who “shall thrust out the sinners from the inheritance,” and “gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness.” “He shall not suffer iniquity to lodge in their midst; and none that knoweth wickedness shall dwell with them. . . . And he shall purge Jerusalem and make it holy, even as it was in the days of old. So that the nations may come from the ends of the earth to see his glory, bringing as gifts her sons that had fainted, and may see the glory of the Lord, wherewith God hath glorified her.”<sup>3</sup>

From that bright city of vision we must drop to earth again, to the Jerusalem of Hyrcanus and Antipater. We had followed events up to the moment when Antipater was suddenly cut off by poison. The deed brought no profit to the doer. Instantly the place of Antipater was taken by his sons, Herod and Phasael, and the murderer was ensnared by their contrivance and killed. Herod was at this

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xvii. 5, 6.<sup>2</sup> Ps. xvii. 23.<sup>3</sup> Ps. xvii.

time (43 B.C.) twenty-nine years old. He had already been governor of Galilee and shown his strong hand in crushing the bandit-chief Hezekiah; he had already so alarmed the Jerusalem aristocracy, that nothing but the favour of the Roman governor had saved him on one occasion from being condemned to death. He showed before long that he had also inherited his father's adroitness in trimming, for the Roman East once again changed masters when Antony and Octavian beat Brutus and Cassius at Philippi in 42. Antony, to whose share the East fell, soon declared himself as friendly to the family of Antipater, and we note fresh modification in the position at Jerusalem. Once more Hyrcanus was deprived of all political functions and left with only the high-priesthood, but now the political direction of the Jewish state was formally committed by Antony to Herod and Phasaël, together with the title of *tetrarch*.

Antony  
and the  
Jews

The next change was of a much more violent kind. In all revolutions of the Roman state, the Idumæan steersmen of the Jewish state were able to shift the helm with such agility as to avoid shipwreck; the next storm was not a conflict of Roman factions, but a momentary displacement of Roman power altogether. In the year 40, when Rome was still represented in the East by Mark Antony, a Parthian army overran Syria, and riding on the crest of the Parthian wave came the Hasmonæan prince, Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus II. This was too much for the skill of Phasaël and Herod. Phasaël was taken and killed by the Parthians, Herod fled, and once more Jerusalem obeyed a Hasmonæan king. Hyrcanus was carried off a

*and was  
son of  
1. Jabi*

prisoner to Babylon, his ears cropped, so as to disqualify him for the priestly office. The national Sadducean aristocracy, relieved from the hated predominance of the parvenu Idumæans, had their last spell of power. The Romans answered by proclaiming Herod King of the Jews; Herod had found his way to Rome, and it was in Rome that his elevation to royalty took place. Of course, by this time the generals of Mark Antony had grappled with the Parthians in Syria, and Herod returned in 39 to Palestine to fight in co-operation with the Roman forces for his own return. The vicissitudes of that fight between the two kings of the Jews, the Idumæan recognised by Rome and the Hasmonæan upheld by the national aristocracy, need not occupy us now. Enough that by the end of 38 nothing but Jerusalem itself was left to King Antigonus; Herod was master of all the Jewish territory outside. In 37 Herod laid siege to Jerusalem and the Roman governor, Gaius Sosius, brought up an army to his support. Once more Jerusalem was taken, and Antigonus, the last Hasmonæan king, was the first king whom the Romans beheaded. Herod begins that reign which extends unbroken till we reach the confines of the New Testament narrative (37-4 B.C.).

For the first years of his reign Herod's position was very far from safe. The series of revolutions in the Roman world had not yet reached its term. At the time Herod ascended his throne in Jerusalem, Mark Antony, as we saw, was the ruler of the Roman East, and Herod, of course, was Antony's man, heart and soul. But even during the time of Antony's rule there were dangers for Herod:

for Cleopatra the queen of Egypt was hostile to him, and although, for reasons of policy, Antony was his friend, it was never certain whether the influence of Cleopatra with Antony might not overbear reasons of policy. Then the war between Antony and the ruler of the West, Octavianus Cæsar, brought new dangers, for Herod supported Antony with zeal, and when Antony was broken and Cæsar came out master of the whole Roman world, after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. it was a question whether Cæsar would regard Herod favourably. When this crisis was happily past, and Cæsar not only received him into favour, but enlarged his territory, so that it included, besides the Philistine coast with Gaza, Joppa, and Straton's-Tower, some districts also east of the Jordan, there were no more changes in the Roman Empire to disquiet him. But it was not till a few years later, till 25 B.C., that he finally got rid of the internal danger which menaced him from the Hasmonæan house. And that danger he only got rid of by the most ugly surgery, for so long as any representatives of the Hasmonæan family lived, the national sentiment clung to their persons. One of his first steps in coming into power had been to put forty-five of the leaders of the old aristocracy to death, and by 25 B.C. all the remaining members of the Hasmonæan family had come to a violent end by his orders — even the old Hyrcanus, his father's friend, who had come back from Babylon, at Herod's invitation, in the hope of ending his days peaceably at Jerusalem. One princess of the Hasmonæan house, Mariamne, the grand-daughter both of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus II., Herod had himself married. I dare say you know, most of you, the



tragedy in which that marriage issued—how the cold reserve of Mariamne, moving among the Edomite destroyers of her house, a Hebrew of the blood royal, affected the stormy passion of Herod only by adding to it the sharpness of an exquisite despair, but irritated the women of the upstart family to bitter hatred, how they found means to make Herod believe that she was unfaithful to him, and how in the rage of baffled love he killed her, and then almost went mad with longing and remorse. By the slaying of the sons of Babas in 25 B.C. the Hasmonæan blood became extinct, except for such as ran in the veins of Herod's own children by Mariamne, his sons Alexander and Aristobulus and two daughters.

It is easy to grasp the characteristics of Herod the Great so far as to see embodied in him a type perpetually recurrent in history, especially in oriental history. There is a great general resemblance between all those shapers of kingdoms in unsettled times—men strong of hand, unscrupulous, merciless to all rivals, vehement livers, but shrewd in vision, who when established in power bring to their subjects such good as goes with public order strongly enforced, and find their pride in great works which tend to increase the prosperity of their realms. That description fits Herod as it would fit many another man who has risen to power—Peter the Great, Mohammed Ali of Egypt, the list might be made a long one—but I do not know that we can be more precise, so as to distinguish Herod from others of the class. He seems perhaps to have been more than usually vulnerable on the side of his affections, which quality however, being played

upon by intriguers, caused him to be goaded into crimes which a man of a colder heart would have avoided. But it also saves him, in spite of his barbarism and deeds of blood, from being altogether repulsive.

His reign certainly brought some good things to his people. We can see that at his accession Palestine was suffering from a complete break-up of all public order. The convulsions of the last twelve years had replaced society by chaos. The land was the prey of bands of robbers. Herod restored order with an iron hand which the robbers found could reach them even in their most inaccessible holds. The ordinary business of human intercourse could be gradually resumed, and in this way Herod also prepared in the wilderness a highway for the Christ. The material prosperity and dignity of the land was increased by a rapid growth of new cities under his directing eye. One of these was the new Samaria, which rose in 27 B.C. to take the place of the city destroyed by John Hyrcanus seventy-seven years before, with the new name of Sebaste, given it in honour of Cæsar, who received the surname of Augustus in that year; the Greeks translated Augustus by *Sebastos*. The most illustrious of all was the city which replaced Straton's Tower on the coast. This also was named in honour of Cæsar, Cæsarea. Its building took twelve years (22-10 B.C.) and included the construction of a magnificent harbour, no doubt to the great advantage of Jewish commerce. Cæsarea was the second city of the kingdom, and later on, when Judæa was a Roman province, the seat of the procurator was here, and not at Jerusalem.

Are we to regard this king of the Jews as being a Jewish king? His family, no doubt, was Edomite, but it had been Jewish in practice and in status for at least two generations before him. Herod himself in such externals as circumcision conformed to the Law. His sons, as we saw, inherited the blood of the Hasmonæans. Probably if Herod had followed the Jewish traditions with any zeal, the nation would have overlooked the discredit of his extraction; but if he was regarded as an alien, it was only too true that his interests and ambitions lay far outside the sphere of Judaism. He wished to be a great king among the kings of the world, and that in those days meant to be a Hellenistic king. Herod wished to leave no room for doubt as to the genuineness of his Hellenism. His court was full of the usual crowd of Greek parasites. Among his most trusted advisers was Nicolas of Damascus, whose standing as a rhetorician and man of letters was really considerable. One fragmentary notice gives us a delightful glimpse of the way Herod's studies in the field of Greek culture were conducted. "Herod's ardour for philosophy," it says, "evaporated, as is usually the case with those in high station, who are surrounded by too many good things to persevere, and his next passion was rhetoric. Nicolas was now compelled to study rhetoric with him, and they composed speeches together. Soon he changed again and fell in love with history. Nicolas expressed approval: he said that it was a study intimately connected with the duties of a citizen, and that it was useful for a king too to be informed as to the achievements and the events of the past. Herod entered impulsively upon the new field and he

urged Nicolas to take up historical writing.”<sup>1</sup> To the world Herod advertised the sterling quality of his Hellenism in the usual form of munificence to Greek cities. He built for them temples and *stoas* and baths. His name was remembered as a benefactor in Athens and Sparta and Rhodes. At Antioch a colonnade running down either side of the principal street was a constant reminder to the citizens of Herod’s zeal. In his own kingdom, the new cities he built were of Hellenistic type and he was deterred by no scruple from rearing temples in them to the deity of Cæsar. Even in the confines of Jerusalem he built a theatre and an amphitheatre. One could hardly expect the Jews to regard such a king as a son of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Herod did not abjure his other rôle—however inconsistent—of a Jewish national king. In the negative way, he abstained from putting the image of any living thing upon his coinage, or from introducing any graven image into Jerusalem—at any rate till quite the last years of his reign. A curious story is told us of the trophies which he set up in the theatre at Jerusalem in honour of the victories of Cæsar. These were of the kind usual in antiquity, suits of armour arranged upon poles, and, of course, looked something like statues of armed men. The public at Jerusalem was

<sup>1</sup> Müller’s *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, iii. p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> One may notice here the absurdity of the guise in which Herod was made to appear recently in the drama of Mr. Stephen Phillips. Mr. Tree was got up with scrupulous inaccuracy as an Assyrian monarch with a long curled beard! Of course, the real Herod would have worn the garb of Greek civilisation and was probably clean-shaven according to the fashion of the Greco-Roman world at that time. To represent him as an Assyrian is very much as if one should represent His Highness the Khedive arrayed as a Calif of the Arabian Nights.

profoundly disturbed, and it might have come to a formidable tumult, had not Herod invited the leaders of the people to examine his trophies more closely. Under their suspicious scrutiny, the armour of a trophy was piece by piece removed till the bare pole stood revealed in its unimpeachable innocence. Herod also abstained from contracting family alliances with any outside the community of Israel; the hand of his daughters was for none except men circumcised. Nor was it only in negative ways that he consulted Jewish sentiment. There was now an immense scattered body of Jews all over the Roman world, exposed in different places to annoyance from their Gentile fellow-townsmen or to requisitions on the part of Gentile magistrates which clashed with their religion. Herod persistently used his influence, as a king and a friend of Cæsar's, to protect the Jews of the Dispersion, and considering the solidarity of the whole Jewish community such benefits could not but be appreciated at Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The chief work by which he appealed to Jewish feeling was one in which he could also gratify his pride—the rebuilding of the Temple on a scale of new magnificence. It was not without misgivings that the Jews learnt that the existing Temple, the House raised with such hopes by Zerubbabel, with shouting and tears, five hundred years before, the House associated with so many memories of their fathers, was to disappear; but Herod promised that the work of demolition should not begin till the waggons and stones were waiting on the spot to begin the reconstruction. The

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded of the way in which the French Government has often been the protector of Roman Catholic missions abroad whilst its home policy has been severely coercive with regard to the Church.



workmen on the new Temple were all priests who had been specially trained. And so in 20-19 B.C. the building began which was still going on when the Lord taught in the Temple courts. "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"<sup>1</sup> And that the splendour of the new Temple was not lost upon the Jewish community is indicated by that passage of the gospels where the Lord's disciples, men of the people, draw his attention to its glory. "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here."<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps worth noticing that even here the style of architecture bore witness to the prevailing Greek culture; the Corinthian column, with its florid capital, everywhere in vogue after the days of Alexander, gave its distinctive note to the whole.<sup>3</sup>

The last years of Herod (13-4 B.C.) were made miserable by the intrigues of his household. Herod was quite oriental in his polygamy, and it is the usual effect of polygamy in an oriental court to divide it against itself. The two sons of Mariamne stood of course higher in prestige than the children of Herod's baser wives, and were the mark of relentless jealousies. The malignant woman Salome, Herod's sister, who was in great part responsible for the death of Mariamne, was still at his elbow to poison his mind according to the course of her own enmities. The story of those dreadful years at the Jewish court is given at length by Josephus, the ramifying plots and counter-plots, the web of treacheries. And in the midst of his tormentors, blind and savage, the old king, like a

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 19.<sup>2</sup> Mark xiii. 1.<sup>3</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11, 5, §. 414.

baited bull, wounds wildly, not knowing friend from foe. His very suspicions create the treachery which he fears. He makes forlorn attempts to escape from the ring, to get the love of his sons. But he knows not whom to trust, and who is there that can trust him? He tries to clear the situation, to lay hold of the truth, by the ruthless application of torture, and the situation gets steadily worse. At last the sons of Mariamne are put to death at his command. And then Herod finds that the real traitor was that other son of his, Antipater, who had been their accuser.

By the end of the year 5 B.C. Herod lay upon his death-bed. He was carried to the hot springs of Callirhoe east of Jordan. But his disease was beyond cure. He died in the early spring of the following year (B.C. 4), at Jericho, shortly before the Passover. Five days before he died he had received from Rome the permission which allowed him to put Antipater to death. Other sons, whose youth had saved them from entanglements, survived him, and the kingdom was divided by Cæsar among Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip. Archelaus got Judæa proper, Antipas Galilee, and Philip the regions of the north-east. But they were no longer allowed to bear the name of kings. Archelaus was only *ethnarch*, and his two brothers *tetrarchs*. Galilee, when Jesus went about it preaching, was still governed by Herod Antipas, the Herod who put John the Baptist to death. But Judæa was then no longer under Archelaus. In the year 6 A.D. the Romans had deposed him for misgovernment, and since then that part of Herod the Great's kingdom had been governed by Roman procur-

ators, sitting in Cæsarea. Pontius Pilate was only in Jerusalem for the special occasion of the great feast, when Jesus was brought to his judgment seat.

In speaking of that moment we glance on to a time long after the days of King Herod, and to those days I return once more, to ask more particularly the question, how those days, so brilliant to an outside view, appear if we try to look at them from within, from the point of view of the Jewish people? As far as the Sadducean aristocracy, the warlike party who had adhered to the last Hasmonæans, are concerned, the question is hardly worth raising. They, of course, regarded the power which dispossessed them with implacable hostility, and Herod knew of no method of dealing with them, except the knife, and, as we saw, he had, when he took Jerusalem from Antigonus in 37, immediately put the forty-five most prominent members of the aristocracy to death—probably, that is, half the Senate. He also took care to allow no high-priest to imperil his throne by any possibility of rivalry. The high-priestly office was now held only by his own nominees, his creatures whom he set up and plucked down at his pleasure. One of them came from Babylon, another belonged to an Alexandrian family. When he tried the experiment of putting in a child of the Hasmonæan house, the boy Aristobulus, as a measure likely to win him popularity, the general enthusiasm convinced him that it was by no means safe, and he had Aristobulus murdered. All his subsequent high-priests were nobodies.

The attitude of the Pharisaïc party towards

Herod is not so easy to define. In some ways he would be less liable to give offence than the Hasmonæans. It was an advantage that he did not himself hold the high-priesthood, for the sin most poignantly felt in the case of the Hasmonæan priesthood had been that they ministered about the holy things, while not observing the Pharisaic rules of purity. And the Pharisees, as we saw, cared far more about the high-priesthood than about the political supremacy. Probably there were considerable variations within the Pharisaic party itself in the way they regarded the rule of Herod. It seems to have been a prevalent feeling that the political power, which belonged by right to the house of David, was entirely a matter for God's disposal. So long as He suffered it to be usurped by an alien, it was a chastisement which Israel should patiently endure, and await God's good time for bringing in the rightful king, not by the arm of flesh, but by miraculous intervention. When Herod ordered the people to take an oath of allegiance to him, the Pharisees as a body doggedly refused. His right they would not recognise, but neither were they minded actively to rebel. It is justly insisted upon, as a significant fact, by modern writers on this period that the two most prominent Pharisaic doctors of the day, called by Josephus Polion and Sameas, were treated with great honour and consideration by the Herodian court.

Of course, any infringement of the religious Law was a very different matter and goaded the Jew out of his passivity. At the end of his reign Herod seems to have taken unwise liberties in this direction. An eagle appears on some of his coins.

Worse still, on the new Temple itself the eyes of the religious detected with offence the gilt figure of an eagle among the decorations. When Herod's last illness relaxed some of the constraint on men's tongues, two rabbis of influence, Judas and Matthias, began boldly to impress upon their disciples how meritorious it would be to demolish the scandal, and on a premature report of the king's death, a mob led by the younger Pharisees, tore the eagle down. This provoked reprisals on the part of Herod, and the two rabbis, with a number of their disciples, were burnt at the stake.

We cannot doubt that the people as a whole detested the Idumæan rule. Even its external splendour, even the building of the Temple, meant, as in the case of Solomon, grievous financial oppression, and apart from the moral and sentimental injury which Israel sustained, there was the continuous material burden of heavy taxation. Isolated acts of remission at moments of special distress—Herod indeed seems to have been ready to display such generosity as the necessities of his government and his ambitions allowed—could not undo the effect of the regular system. The disciples of Judas and Matthias had the full sympathy of the people in that outbreak connected with the golden eagle, and when on the night after the burning of the two rabbis, the night of the 12th of March B.C. 4, there was an eclipse of the moon, the people of Jerusalem read in the portent the horror of Heaven at the martyrdom of saints. It maddened Herod upon his death-bed to think that the people would rejoice over his dead body, and he left it as a solemn charge to his sister Salome



to see that a large body of the notables whom he had summoned to Jericho was massacred instantly upon his decease, that the people might have matter enough for tears. Salome promised, but did not hold such a promise one necessary to keep.

But whatever the people had felt, the Idumæan kept them under with a hand more rigorous than any of which they had had experience before. They were quiet under the paralysing incubus of a despotism which it was utterly hopeless to resist. The Pharisaïc pietist had already learnt under the Hasmonæans to turn away from this world to heaven, to the future ; and now under Herod, all the current of national feeling which had been set running during the last generations in such strength beat against a blind wall, and itself found no outlet save through the channels opened by the Pharisee. It was among the people bent down beneath that iron necessity that the transcendental beliefs, the Messianic hopes, nurtured in the Pharisaïc schools, spread and propagated themselves with a new vitality. The few books of Pharisaïc piety which have come down to us—*Enoch*, the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Assumption of Moses* and others—show us indeed what ideas occupied the minds of writers, but they could not have shown what we learn from our Gospels—how ideas of this order had permeated the people through and through, how the figure of the coming King, the “Anointed One,” the “Son of David,” how definite conceptions of the resurrection, of the other world, were part of the ordinary mental furniture of that common people which hung upon the words of the Lord. Sadduceïsm was only a withering survival, which

still clung to the higher priesthood,<sup>1</sup> and on the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. it disappeared with the priesthood from Israel.

It was, according to Schürer, under King Herod—according to the learned English editor of *Enoch*, Professor Charles, in the latter days of Hasmonæan rule—that the most remarkable of the documents in *Enoch* was delivered to the faithful. This writing extends, with interpolations, from chapter xxxvii. to chapter lxx. in the book as we have it, and is ordinarily known as the *Similitudes*. Its general burden is the same as that of other apocalyptic writings, that the day is coming when the great injustice of the present world, the oppression of the righteous by the wicked, will be redressed, when the wicked will be judged, and the righteous enter into bliss. But its peculiar feature is the image it presents of him by whom judgment is done. He is no earthly son of David, and yet he has the form of a Son of Man. Enoch, carried into heaven, sees the Head of Days, the Lord of Spirits, and with Him, dwelling under the shadow of His wings,<sup>2</sup> is another Being, whose countenance has the appearance of a man, and his face is full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. “And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me, This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> xxxix. 7.

Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness for ever.”<sup>1</sup> The writing speaks of him as the Elect One, the Anointed. “Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous on which they will support themselves and not fall, and he will be the light of the Gentiles and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and bow the knee before him and will bless and laud and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. And for this reason hath he been chosen and hidden before him before the creation of the world and for evermore. And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits hath revealed him to the holy and righteous, for he preserveth the lot of the righteous, because they have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness, and have hated all its works and ways in the name of the Lord of Spirits.”<sup>2</sup> It is this Elect One, this mystic Son of Man, to whom all judgment is committed. He will judge even the works of the holy angels in heaven and weigh their deeds in the balance.<sup>3</sup> And his revelation in transcendent power upon earth will bring the reign of the wicked, of “the kings and the mighty” as they are regularly described in this writing, to a sudden end. The Lord of Spirits will cause his Elect One to sit upon the throne of his glory to judge in the fulness of wisdom, for “he is mighty in the secrets of righteousness”<sup>4</sup> and “no one will be able to utter a lying word before him”<sup>5</sup> “And in those days will the earth also give back those who are

<sup>1</sup> xlvi. 1-3.<sup>2</sup> xlviii. 3-7.<sup>3</sup> lxi. 8.<sup>4</sup> xlix. 2.<sup>5</sup> xlix. 4.

treasured up within it, and Sheol also will give back that which it hath received, and hell will give back that which it oweth.”<sup>1</sup> A separation will take place between the righteous and the wicked. The kings and the mighty will worship the Son of Man and entreat for mercy, but they will shrink from his presence, “and their faces will be filled with shame, and darkness will be piled upon their faces. And the angels of punishment will take them in charge to execute vengeance on them, because they have oppressed his children and his elect.”<sup>2</sup> The earth will be purified of all evil. “By the word of his mouth he shall slay all the sinners.”<sup>3</sup> “And I will transform the earth and make it a blessing and cause Mine elect ones to dwell upon it; but the sinners and evil-doers will not set foot thereon.”<sup>4</sup> “Unrighteousness will disappear as a shadow and have no continuance.”<sup>5</sup> The heavens also will be transformed and made an eternal blessing and light.<sup>6</sup> And in this new heaven and new earth the righteous will form a glorious church about the Person of the Son of Man. In the former age of the world the Son of Man had been hidden before God and only revealed in spiritual vision to the elect, but now “the congregation of the holy and elect will be sown, and all the elect will stand before him.”<sup>7</sup> “The Righteous and Elect One will cause the house of his congregation to appear.”<sup>8</sup> “And the Lord of Spirits will abide over them, and with that Son of Man will they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever.”<sup>9</sup>

You cannot wonder that this book was widely

<sup>1</sup> li. 1.    <sup>2</sup> lxii. 10, 11.    <sup>3</sup> lxii. 2.    <sup>4</sup> xlv. 5.    <sup>5</sup> xlix. 2.

<sup>6</sup> xlv. 4.    <sup>7</sup> lxii. 7, 8.    <sup>8</sup> liii. 6.    <sup>9</sup> lxii. 14.

read and loved in the early Christian Church. And yet it is not written altogether as a Christian would probably have written it. There is no hint of incarnation, of abasement, in the vision of this heavenly Being; no shadow of death passes upon his countenance; he is all through radiant and unearthly and victorious. But indeed the Christ whom the Christian worshipped was not the embodiment of any single one of those forms which had risen upon prophetic thought; in Him all the hopes and ideals of the past met and blended; the heavenly Son of Man and the earthly Son of David, the suffering Servant of the Hebrew prophet and the Slain God of the Greek mystic, the Wisdom of the Hebrew sage and the Logos of the Greek philosopher, all met in Him; but He was more than all,



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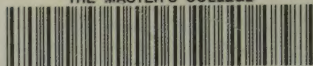
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